

JOKER GRAPHIC NOVEL ALAN MOORE
THE KILLING JOKE (46 PAGES)

PAGE 1

(PANEL) 1.

WELL, I'VE CHECKED THE LANDING GEAR, FASTENED MY SEATBELT, SWALLOWED MY CIGAR IN A SINGLE GULP AND GROUND MY SCOTCH AND SODA OUT IN THE ASTRAY PROVIDED, SO I SUPPOSE WE'RE ALL SET FOR TAKE OFF. BEFORE WE GO SCREECHING OFF INTO THOSE ANGRY CREATIVE SKIES FROM WHICH WE MAY BOTH WELL RETURN AS BLACKENED CINDERS, I SUPPOSE A FEW PRELIMINARY NOTES ARE IN ORDER, SO SIT BACK WHILE I RUN THROUGH THEM WITH ACCOMPANYING HAND MOVEMENTS FROM OUT CHARMING STEWARDESS IN THE CENTRE AISLE.

FIRSTLY, SINCE I'M NOT ENTIRELY SURE HOW THESE GRAPHIC NOVELS ARE SET OUT, MIGHT I SUGGEST THAT IF THERE ARE END-PAPERS OF ANY KIND THEY MIGHT BE DESIGNED SO AS TO FLOW INTO AND OUT OF THE FIRST AND LAST PANELS OF THE STORY. SINCE BOTH THE FIRST AND LAST PANELS CONTAIN A SIMPLE CLOSE-UP IMAGE OF THE SURFACE OF A PUDDLE RIPPLED BY RAIN, THEN MAYBE A SIMPLE ENLARGEMENT OF A BLACK AND WHITE RIPPLE EFFECT TO THE POINT WHERE IT BECOMES HUGE AND ABSTRACT WOULD BE IN ORDER? AS WITH ALL MY VISUAL SUGGESTIONS, BOTH HERE AND IN THE PANEL DESCRIPTIONS BELOW, PLEASE DON'T FEEL BOUND IN BY THEM IN ANYWAY. THEY'RE ONLY MEANT AS WORKABLE SUGGESTIONS, SO IF YOU CAN SEE A BETTER SET OF PICTURES THAN I CAN (WHICH I'D SAY IS QUITE LIKELY, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED) THEN PLEASE FEEL FREE TO THROW OUT WHAT I'VE COME UP WITH AND SUBSTITUTE WHATEVER YOU FEEL LIKE.

I WANT YOU TO FEEL AS COMFORTABLE AND UNRESTRICTED AS POSSIBLE DURING THE SEVERAL MONTHS OF YOUR BITTERLY BRIEF MORTAL LIFESPAN THAT YOU'LL SPEND WORKING ON THIS JOB, SO JUST LAY BACK AND MELLOW OUT. TAKE YOUR SHOES AND SOCKS OFF. FIDDLE AROUND INBETWEEN YOUR TOES. NOBODY CARES. ANOTHER GENERAL NOTE WOULD REGARD STYLE AND PRESENTATION. I'VE ALREADY GONE INTO THIS IN THE SYNOPSIS, SO I WON'T DWELL ON IT TOO MUCH HERE, EXCEPT TO UNDERLINE A COUPLE OF THE MORE IMPORTANT POINTS, ONE SUCH POINT WOULD BE OUR TREATMENT OF THE BATMAN AND HIS MYTHOS, INCLUDING THE BATMOBILE, THE BATCAVE AND WHATEVER OTHER ELEMENTS MIGHT FIND THEMSELVES INCLUDED IN THE STORY BEFORE

IT'S END. AS I SEE IT, THIS STORY ISN'T SET IN ANY SPECIFIC TIME PERIOD. WE DIDN'T SHOW ANY CALENDARS, OR ANY NEWSPAPERS WITH HEADLINES CLOSE ENOUGH TO READ THE DATE. THE ARCHITECTURE AND THE SETTINGS IN GENERAL THAT WE SEE ARE EITHER OBVIOUSLY OLD AND DATES, AS IN THE CARNIVAL SEQUENCES, OR HAVE AN AMBIGUOUS SORT OF LOOK TO THEM THAT'S BOTH FUTURISTIC AND ANTIQUE AT THE SAME TIME, AS WITH THE FLEISCHER-SUPERMAN/LANG'S METROPOLIS LOOK THAT I SEE OUR VERSION OF GOTHAM CITY AS HAVING, AT LEAST ON IT'S UPPER LEVELS. THE LOWER AND SEEDIER LEVELS OF GOTHAM ARE MORE INCLINED TOWARDS A TERRITORY SOMEWHERE BETWEEN DAVID LYNCH AND THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI, ALL PATCHES OF RUST AND MOULD AND HISSING STEAM AND DAMP, GLISTENING ALLEYWAYS. I IMAGINE THIS STRIP AS HAVING AN OPPRESSIVELY DARK FILM NOIR FEEL TO IT, WITH A LOT OF UNPLEASANTLY TANGIBLE TEXTURES, SUCH AS YOU HABITUALLY RENDER SO DELIGHTFULLY, TO GIVE THE WHOLE THING A REALLY INTENSE FEELING OF PALPABLE UNEASE AND CRAZYNES. SINCE I KNOW THAT YOU LIKE USING LARGE AREAS OF BLACK ANYWAY, THEN MIGHT I SUGGEST THAT WE USE THE DARK AND SHADOWY NATURE OF OUR BACKDROPS AND THE BLACKNESS OF THE BATMAN'S COSTUME TO GIVE US AS MANY INTERESTING PRIMARILY-BLACK COMPOSITIONS AS WE CAN GET AWAY WITH? THE FACT THAT THE JOKER IS SUCH A BLEACHED AND BLOODLESS WHITE PLAYS OFF INTERESTINGLY AGAINST THIS, I RECKON, SO PLEASE FEEL FREE TO GO COMPLETELY LOOPY WITH THE QUINK ON THIS ONE. AS FAR AS THE CHARACTERS THEMSELVES GO, I'LL DESCRIBE THEM IN DETAIL WHEN THEY MAKE THEIR APPEARANCES, BUT MY ONLY GENERAL NOTE WOULD BE THAT LIKE THE LANDSCAPE AND THE VARIOUS PROPS, THEY HAVE A SORT OF TIMELESS AND MYTHIC QUALITY TO THEM WHICH DOESN'T FIX THEM FIRMLY IN ANY ONE AGE-RANGE OR TIME-PERIOD. THE JOKER LOOKS EITHER OLD OR BADLY DEPRAVED, BUT THEN HE'S ALWAYS LOOKED THAT WAY. THE BATMAN IS BIG AND GRIM AND OLDER THAN WE ARE, BECAUSE AS I REMEMBER THE BATMAN HE'S ALWAYS BEEN BIGGER AND OLDER THAN I AM AND I'LL FIGHT ANY MAN THAT SAYS DIFFERENT. GIVEN THIS TIMELESS AND MYTHIC QUALITY, IT ALSO STRIKES ME THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THIS STORY THAT HAVE STRONG OPERATIC ELEMENTS. BOTH THE BATMAN AND THE JOKER HAVE A POWERFUL OPERATIC QUALITY TO THEIR APPEARANCE IN THAT THE JOKER IS AN EXTREME VERSION OF THE HARLEQUIN FIGURE WITH THE BATMAN'S CAPE AND MASK LOOKING LIKE SOMETHING STRAIGHT OUT OF DIE

FLEDERMAUS. I DUNNO WHY I MENTION THIS EXCEPT TO UNDERLINE THE SORT OF GRAND EMOTIONAL INTENSITY I WANT THIS BOOK TO HAVE WITH BOTH THE BATMAN AND THE JOKER BECOMING POWERFUL AND PRECISE SYMBOLIC FIGURES IN A NIGHTMARISH AND ALMOST ABSTRACT LANDSCAPE. ANYWAY, BEFORE I WANDER OFF INTO A COMPLETELY IMPENETRABLE AESTHETIC FOG I SUPPOSE WE OUT TO ROLL OUR SLEEVES UP AND GET STRAIGHT DOWN TO BUSINESS WITHOUT FURTHER ADO.

THIS FIRST PAGE AND A COUPLE OF THE SUBSEQUENT ONES HAVE NINE PANELS APIECE, ALBEIT WITH VERY LITTLE OR NO DIALOGUE TO CLUTTER THEM UP. I WANT THE SILENCE AND THE METRONOME-LIKE VISUAL BEAT THAT THE PANELS WILL HAVE TO CREATE A SENSE OF TENSION AND INTRIGUE AND SUSPENSE WITH WHICH TO DRAG THE READER INTO THE STORY, WHILE STILL LEAVING US ENOUGH ROOM TO SET UP ALL THE NARRATIVE AND ATMOSPHERIC ELEMENTS THAT WE WANT TO ESTABLISH. IN THIS FIRST PANEL, WE HAVE A TIGHT CLOSE UP OF THE SURFACE OF A PUDDLE. (SEE? AND THERE WAS YOU ALL WORRIED THAT I WOULDN'T GIVE YOU ANYTHING FASCINATING TO DRAW.) WE ARE SO CLOSE TO THE PUDDLE AS TO SEE IT ONLY AS AN ALMOST ABSTRACT IMAGE OF WIDENING RIPPLES SPREADING ACROSS A SHADOWY AND BLACK LIQUID SURFACE. IT IS NIGHT TIME, AND THE RIPPLES THAT WE SEE IN THE FOREGROUND ARE CAUSED BY LARGE DROPLETS OF RAIN THAT FALL THROUGH THE FOREGROUND IN DIAGONAL SLASHES. MAYBE WE CAN SEE ONE DROPLET AS ITS PRECISE MOMENT OF IMPACT WITH THE PUDDLE, SO CLOSE ARE WE TO IT. ALTHOUGH I DON'T SUPPOSE THAT THIS INFORMATION WILL MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE TO THIS CURRENT PANEL, FOR YOUR FUTURE REFERENCE IT IS MID NOVEMBER AND BITTERLY COLD. HERE, ALL WE SEE IS THE RAIN SPLASHING INTO THE PUDDLE AND THE SILVERY WHITE RIPPLES SPREADING OUT ACROSS THE DARKNESS.

No Dialogue.

2.

SAME SHOT, BUT NOW WE PULL BACK MAYBE A FOOT OR MORE SO THAT WE CAN AT LEAST SEE A COUPLE OF THE PUDDLES EDGES, DEFINING IT AS A PUDDLE AND GIVING US SOME SENSE OF ITS LOCATION. THE PUDDLE IS IN FACT SITUATED AT THE BASE OF ONE OF THE STONE PILLARS/GATE-POSTS THAT FRAME THE GATES OF ARKHAM ASYLUM, THESE PILLARS BEING SET INTO A BLACK RAILED FENCE OF WROUGHT IRON BEYOND WHICH ONLY DARK AND SHADOWY CYPRESS TREES, STRIPPED BY AUTUMN, ARE VISIBLE. IN THIS SECOND PANEL, WE CAN'T SEE

VERY MUCH OF THIS..JUST THE ASE OF ONE OF THE STONE GATE POSTS AND A LITTLE OF THE ROAD SURFACE IMMEDIATELY OUTSIDE THE ASYLUM GATES, WITH THE SIZEABLE PUDDLE RESTING IN AN INDENTATION THEREOF. THE RAIN IS STILL FALLING AND SPLASHING INTO THE PUDDLE, AND PERHAPS WE SEE AN AUTUMN LEAF BOWLING THROUGH THE PANEL SOMEWHERE. THE REAL POINT OF THIS PANEL IS THAT SUDDENLY, REFLECTED IN THE PUDDLE, WE SEE THE HEADLIGHTS OF A CAR THAT IS APPROACHING THE GATES FROM OFF-PANEL ABOVE. IN THE RIPPLED SURFACE OF THE PUDDLE, EVEN THOUGH THE LIGHTS ARE STILL IDENTIFIABLE AS REFLECTED HEADLIGHTS, THERE IS AN INTERESTING OSCILLATING DISPLAY OF LIQUID LIGHT AND SHADOW PATTERNS.

No Dialogue.

3.

WE PULL BACK STILL FURTHER SO THAT WE CAN SEE MOST OF THE STONE GATE PILLAR, THE BOTTOM OF WHICH WE SAW LAST PANEL, AND SO THAT WE CAN ALSO SEE THE OTHER PILLAR COMING INTO VIEW, UP IN THE RIGHT OF THE FOREGROUND, WE CANNOT SEE THE TOP OF THIS FOREGROUND PILLAR YET, OR THE METAL PLATE AFFIXED TO IT, BUT WE CAN NOW SEE THAT THE STONE PILLARS ARE ARRANGED ON EITHER SIDE OF A WROUGHT IRON GATE ONTO WHICH THE RAIN IS FALLING, DRIPPING MOURNFULLY FROM THE BLACK AND SINISTER IRONWORK. LOOKING BEYOND THE GATE AND ITS PILLARS WE CAN SEE THE RAILED IRON FENCE THAT THE GATE IS SET INTO STRETCHING AWAY TO THE END OF THE ROW, LOOKING BEYOND THE ROW OF RAILINGS AND INTO THE DARKNESS BEYOND WE CAN SEE THE APPROACHING HEADLIGHTS OF A LARGE DARK CAR. THE LIGHTS LOOK LIKE THE SMOULDERING AND WHITE HOT EYES OF SOME INSANELY VICIOUS AND POWERFUL NOCTURNAL PREDATOR, HISSING THROUGH THE RAIN TOWARDS THE ASYLUM GATES. IN THE PUDDLE, WHICH WE CAN SEE ALL OF NOW, THE HEADLIGHTS OF THE APPROACHING CAR ARE STILL VISIBLE, GETTING BIGGER AS THE CAR APPROACHES.

No Dialogue.

4.

NOW WE'RE PROBABLY ON THE SECOND TIER. IN THIS PANEL WE HAVE PULLED BACK STILL FURTHER FROM THE PUDDLE SO THAT WE CAN SEE ALL OF THE STONE GATE POSTS, INCLUDING THE TOP OF THE ONE RIGHT IN THE RIGHT OF THE FOREGROUND, TO WHICH IS AFFIXED A CLEARLY VISIBLE METAL

PLATE ENGRAVED WITH THE WORDS 'ARKHAM ASYLUM FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE'. THE PLATE LOOKS A LITTLE OLD AND TARNISHED IN PLACES, AND THE RAIN BEATS AGAINST IT MERCILESSLY AS IT FALLS. MOVING CLOSER FROM THE BACKGROUND SINCE LAST PANEL, THE APPROACHING CAR HAS NOW MAYBE COME TO REST JUST OUTSIDE THE ASYLUM GATES, PERHAPS WITH ITS FRONT NEARSIDE TIRE ROLLING INTO THE PUDDLE AS IT COMES TO A HALT. THE HEADLIGHTS ARE GLARING STRAIGHT AT US, SO THAT ALL WE CAN REALLY SEE BEHIND THEM IS A SHADOWY BULK REPRESENTING THE CAR. EVEN SO, THERE IS SOMETHING ODD ABOUT THE CAR'S DESIGN THAT IS APPARENT EVEN THOUGH WE CAN ONLY SEE THE VAGUEST OUTLINE. THE CAR IS IN FACT THE BATMOBILE, AND IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE SORT OF TIMELESS EFFECT THAT WE'RE AFTER I FIGURE WE SHOULD DESIGN A BATMOBILE THAT CONJURES THE BEST ELEMENTS OF OUR FAVOURITE VERSIONS. FOR MY PART, I ALWAYS LIKED THE FIFTIES VERSION, WITH THE LONG HOOD TERMINATING IN A BAT-FACED BATTERING RAM. MAYBE YOU COULD COMBINE THE BASIC CHUNKYNESS AND PERIOD CHARM OF SOMETHING LIKE THAT WITH SOMETHING A BIT MORE SINISTER AND FUTURISTIC.. DRAGGING IN DESIGN ELEMENTS FROM THE 'EIGHTIES AND 'NINETIES, FOR EXAMPLE. AS LONG AS IT'S LONG AND BLACK AND DANGEROUS-LOOKING WITH A BIG FIN STICKING UP AT THE BACK THEN I'LL BE CONTENT. ANYWAY, AS I SAID EARLIER, WE CAN'T SEE MUCH MORE OF THE HUGE CAR HERE THAN ITS SHAPE, CROUCHED THREATENINGLY BEHIND ITS HEADLIGHTS AS IT ROLLS TO A STANDSTILL OUTSIDE THE ASYLUM GATES.

No Dialogue.

PAGE 1.

(PANEL) 5.

NOW WE CHANGE ANGLE SO THAT WE ARE STANDING BETWEEN THE BATMOBILE AND THE RAILED FENCE OF THE ASYLUM, WITH THE NOSE OF THE BATMOBILE POINTING AWAY FROM US FROM THE RIGHT OF THE FOREGROUND TOWARDS THE LEFT OF THE BACKGROUND, WHICH IS WHERE WE CAN SEE THE GATES OF THE ASYLUM SITUATED, THE HEADLIGHTS STILL GLITTERING UPON THE LARGE PUDDLE

AT THE BASE OF THE NEAREST PILLAR. OVER IN THE RIGHT OF THE EXTREME FOREGROUND WE CAN SEE A LITTLE OF ONE DOOR OF THE BATMOBILE, INCLUDING THE HANDLE. OVER ON THE LEFT OF THE EXTREME FOREGROUND WE CAN SEE THE SCALLOPED BLACKNESS OF THE BATMAN'S CLOAK HANGING DOWN INTO THE PICTURE AS HE STANDS JUST OFF PANEL TO

THE LEFT. WE CAN ALSO SEE ONE OF HIS LONG GREY ARMS, DENSELY MUSCLES, REACHING OUT THROUGH THE RAIN TOWARDS THE CAR DOOR, WHERE WE SEE HIS BLACK-FINNED GLOVE JUST PUSHING THE CAR DOOR CLOSED BEHIND HIM AS HE GETS OUT, STANDING BESIDE HIS VEHICLE AND GAZING TOWARDS THE ASYLUM GATES THAT WE HAVE SEEN IN THE BACKGROUND. THE GATES ARE CLOSED, BUT WE CANNOT SEE ANY PADLOCK, SO PRESUMABLY THE GATES HAVE BEEN LEFT OPEN IN ANTICIPATION OF THE BATMAN'S ARRIVAL. PERHAPS WE SEE A COUPLE MORE LEAVES, TUMBLING FORLORNLY THROUGH THE WINDSWEPT NOVEMBER BACKGROUND. IN THE FOREGROUND, THE RAIN RUNS DOWN THE SLEEK AND SHINY BLACK METAL SIDES OF THE BATMOBILE, DRIPPING FROM THE ODDLY-SHAPED WING-MIRRORS.

No Dialogue.

6.

WE ARE NOW ACTUALLY INSIDE THE GROUNDS OF THE ASYLUM, LOOKING DOWN ITS GENTLY CURVING FRONT DRIVEWAY TOWARD THE INSIDE OF THE GATES THAT WE SAW LAST PANEL. THE WET DRIVEWAY CLOSEST TO US IN THE EXTREME FOREGROUND REFLECTS A BLUISH LIGHT CAST BY SOME SOURCE OFF PANEL. LOOKING BEYOND THAT TOWARDS THE GATES, WE SEE THE WEIRD AND UNEARTHLY FIGURE OF THE BATMAN, SILHOUETTED AGAINST THE RAILS OF THE IRON GATE AS HE OPENS IT BY THE LIGHT OF THE STATIONARY BATMOBILE PARKED OFF-PANEL BEHIND HIM. ALL WE SEE OF THE BATMAN HERE AS HE SLIPS SILENTLY THROUGH THE GATE IS HIS SHAPE, WITH NO DETAIL VISIBLE AT ALL. BASICALLY, I DON'T WANT TO GIVE A GOOD CLEAR SHOT OF THE BATMAN'S FACE UNTIL PANEL 4 OF PAGE 5, SO UNTIL THEN WE'LL HAVE TO RUN THROUGH A REPERTOIRE OF TRICK SHOTS AND SHADOWY SCENES WHICH I THINK I HAVE PRETTY WELL WORKED OUT. IN THIS CURRENT PANEL, ALL WE SEE IS HIS UNMISTAKABLE SHAPE AGAINST THE WROUGHT IRON METAL WORK AS HE ENTERS THE GROUNDS OF THE ASYLUM, THE LONG CAPE FLAPPING DISMALLY IN THE NOVEMBER WIND. RAIN STILL FALLS IN SLASHES THROUGH THE FOREGROUND, BOUNCING UP FROM THE SMOOTH ASPHALT OF THE DRIVEWAY.

No Dialogue.

PAGE 1.

(PANEL) 7.

REVERSE OUR ANGLE AGAIN, SO THAT THE OPEN ASYLUM GATE IS NOW IN THE EXTREME FOREGROUND WITH RAIN DRIPPING FROM THE PEELING IRONWORK. LOOKING THROUGH THE OPEN

GATE AND AWAY UP THE DRIVE TOWARDS THE ASYLUM'S MAIN BUILDING, WE SEE A REAR VIEW OF THE BATMAN AS HE WALKS SOLEMNLY UP THE DRIVE AWAY FROM US, THROUGH THE RAIN. HIS CAPE FLAPS ABOUT HIM, IT'S SHARP BLACK TIPS TRAILING THROUGH THE PUDDLES AT HIS FEET AS HE WALKS. HIS BACK IS TURNED TO US, SO THAT WE CANNOT SEE HIS FACE, BUT WE GET A SENSE OF HIS BUILD..HE IS BROAD SHOULDERED, WITH A MASSIVE CHEST AND ENOUGH SLAB-LIKE MUSCLE ON THE REST OF HIS PHYSIQUE TO SUPPORT IT. AS I SEE BATMAN HE ISN'T LITHE AND ATHLETIC-LOOKING..HE'S A VERY BIG MAN, AND THE FACT THAT HE IS CAPABLE OF SUCH STUNNING ATHLETICS DESPITE HIS SIZE IS WHAT IS REMARKABLE ABOUT HIM. HE IS FAST, AGILE, INTELLIGENT AND HIDEOUSLY POWERFUL IN TERMS OF PHYSICAL STRENGTH, AND I WANT HIS PHYSIQUE TO ECHO THIS IRON HARDNESS. I THINK THAT BATMAN HAS SUFFERED A LITTLE FROM HIS PROXIMITY WITH SUPERMAN IN THAT ARTISTS AND WRITERS HAVE PERHAPS FELT COMPELLED TO PLAY UP HIS INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY, KNOWING THAT HE CAN'T COMPETE MUSCLE-FOR-MUSCLE WITH SUPERMAN. HERE, I'D LIKE TO RESTORE SOME OF THE BUILT-LIKE-A-BRICK-SHITHOUSE BATMAN THAT I FONDLY REMEMBER FROM MY BOYHOOD. LOOKING BEYOND HIM HERE AS HE WALKS AWAY UP THE DRIVE AWAY FROM US THROUGH THE RAIN WE CAN SEE THAT THERE IS A POLICE CAR PARKED UP AT THE END OF THE DRIVE, RIGHT OUTSIDE THE STEPS THAT LEAD UP TO THE DOUBLE

DOORS OF THE ASYLUM'S MAIN ENTRANCE. IT'S BLUE LIGHT IS ONE (HENCE THE SOURCE OF THE BLUE LIGHT OFF PANEL IN THE FOREGROUND LAST PANEL) AND WE CAN SEE THERE ARE TWO DARK FIGURES LEANING UP AGAINST ITS SIDE AND FACING US, EVEN THOUGH WE CAN'T SEE WHO THEY ARE HERE. I FIGURE THAT THE BLUE LIGHT ATOP THE POLICE CAR MIGHT PLAY INTERESTINGLY AROUND THE EDGES OF THE BATMAN'S BIZARRE SILHOUETTE AS HE WALKS TOWARDS THE PARKED CAR AND THE ASYLUM DOORS BEYOND. THE TWO FIGURES, WHO PROBABLY WON'T BE VERY VISIBLE HERE, ARE COMMISSIONER GORDON AND A UNIFORMED PATROLMAN. GORDON LEANS AGAINST THE SIDE OF THE PARKED CAR AND SIPPS A PLASTIC CUP FULL OF STEAMING COFFEE WHILE THE PATROLMAN STAND MORE UPRIGHT AND ALERT, PROBABLY IN AN AT-EASE POSITION. ALL OF THIS DETAIL, INCLUDING THE IDENTITIES OF THE TWO MEN, WILL NOT BE APPARENT HERE, BUT I'M GIVING IT TO YOU FOR FUTURE REFERENCE. BEHIND THE PARKED CAR THE ILLUMINATED AND WEIRD FAÇADE OF ARKHAM ASYLUM RISES UP, ITS WINDOWS OMINOUSLY BARRED.

No Dialogue.

PAGE 1.

(PANEL) 8.

NOW WE ARE EVEN CLOSER TO THE POLICE CAR, LOOKING AT IT SIDE-ON SO THAT WE SEE THE UNIFORMED OFFICER STANDING FACE ON TO US OVER ON THE LEFT AS HE STANDS WITH HIS BACK TO THE CAR AND COMMISSIONER GORDON FACE-ON OVER TO THE RIGHT, LEANING AGAINST THE CAR AND DRINKING HIS STEAMING COFFEE, MAYBE LOOKING UP WITH A QUIZZICAL AND CONCERNED LOOK OVER THE RIM OF HIS CUP TOWARDS THE EXTREME LEFT OF THE FOREGROUND, WHERE WE CAN SEE THE BATMAN ENTERING THE PICTURE FROM THE LEFT, IN PROFILE. SINCE BATMAN IS (a) CLOSER TO US AND (b) TALLER THAN EITHER THE COMMISSIONER OR THE PATROLMAN IN THE BACKGROUND WE

CANNOT SEE THE TOP OF HIS HEAD HERE ABOVE THE BOTTOM OF THE NOSE AS THE FRONT OF HIM ENTERS THE PANEL ON THE LEFT. HIS EYES AND UPPER HEAD ARE INVISIBLE BEYOND THE TOP PANEL BORDER AND ALL WE CAN REALLY SEE IS HIS MOUTH, WITH THE BIG AND DETERMINED SQUARE JAW AND THE GRIM AND DISAPPROVING SCOWL OF THE LIPS. THE BATMAN DOES NOT APPEAR FROM HIS POSTURE TO SO MUCH AS GLANCE AT EITHER GORDON OR THE PATROLMAN AS HE WALKS PAST THEM EVEN THROUGH BOTH OF THEM STEAL GLANCES AT HIM WITH DIFFERING LOOKS OF UNEASE. THE PATROLMAN LOOKS UNEASY JUST TO BE IN THE BATMAN'S PRESENCE, WHILE GORDON LOOKS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE BATMAN'S POSSIBLE STATE OF MIND. RAIN DRIPS FROM EVERYTHING, INCLUDING THE BATMAN'S JUTTING AND GRIZZLED CHIN. GORDON GIVES THE LARGELY-OFF-PANEL VIGILANTE A PENETRATING LOOK OVER HIS COFFEE CUP, AND THE BLUE LIGHT ATOP THE CAR WASHES OVER ALL OF THEM AS IT CIRCLES.

No Dialogue.

9.

SAME SHOT EXACTLY, ONLY NOW THE BATMAN HAS WALKED ACROSS THE PANEL AND IS ABOUT TO DISAPPEAR OFF THE RIGHT HAND SIDE, WITH ONLY THE BACK OF HIS COSTUME VISIBLE HERE AS HE DOES SO, HIS FACE ALREADY VANISHED OFF THE RIGHT OF THE PANEL. IMMEDIATELY BEYOND HIM, POLICE COMMISSIONER GORDON STARTS TO STRAIGHTEN UP AWAY FROM THE SIDE OF THE PARKED POLICE VEHICLE, HANDING THE HALF-FULL COFFEE CUP TO THE SURPRISED-LOOKING PATROLMAN WITHOUT LOOKING AT HIM AS HE PREPARES TO FOLLOW THE BATMAN OFF-PANEL. THE SILVER

HAired AND TRENCHCOATED FIGURE OF THE COMMISSIONER DOESN'T TAKE HIS YES OFF THE BATMAN FOR AN INSTANT AS HE PREPARES TO FOLLOW HIM UP THE STEPS AND INTO THE INTERIOR OF THE ASYLUM. THE PATROLMAN LOOKS BEMUSED AS HE TAKES THE STEAMING CUP UNQUESTIONINGLY FROM THE POLICE COMMISSIONER'S HAND. BATMAN WALKS SILENTLY ON WITHOUT SAYING A WORD.
No Dialogue.

PAGE 2.

(PANEL) 1.

WE ARE NOW INSIDE THE RECEPTION LOBBY OF THE ASYLUM. IT IS QUITE SOFTLY LIT, MAYBE WITH A SUBDUED AMBER-YELLOW LIGHT, AND IN THE FOREGROUND FACING AWAY FROM US WE SEE A YOUNG RECEPTIONIST SEATED BEHIND THE RECEPTION DESK, POINTING WITH ONE TREMBLING HAND TOWARDS THE LEFT OF THE PANEL AS SHE GIVES DIRECTIONS TO THE BATMAN, WHO WE SEE STANDING FACING US IMMEDIATELY BEYOND THE DESK. HE IS ONCE MORE DECAPITATED BY THE UPPER PANEL BORDER SO THAT WE CAN'T SEE HIM MUCH BELOW THE CHEST AS HE STANDS THERE GAZING DOWN AND LISTENING TO THE GIRL AS SHE GIVES HIM DIRECTIONS. THE RECEPTIONIST IS LOOKING UP AT THE BATMAN'S OFF-PANEL FACE AND SHE LOOKS ABSOLUTELY SCARED STIFF. ON THE DESK IN THE FOREGROUND WE CAN MAYBE SEE A FEW ITEMS OF PERSON BRIC-A-RAC. THERE ARE A PACK OF MARLBORO CIGARETTES AND A LIGHTER, AND THERE IS MAYBE ONE OF THOSE STUPID LITTLE NOVELTY DESK ORNAMENTS THAT READS 'YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE CRAZY TO WORK HERE..BUT IT HELPS!' WE CAN PROBABLY ALSO SEE THE PAPERBACK BOOK THAT THE RECEPTIONIST HAS BEEN READING TO WHILE AWAY THE LONG, YELLOW-LIT HOURS OF HER TEDIOUS NIGHT SHIFT. I IS 'THE COMEDIANS' BY GRAHAM GREENE. LOOKING BEYOND THE GIRL, THE DESK AND THE BATMAN, WE CAN SEE THE FRONT DOORS OF THE ASYLUM SWING OPEN AS POLICE COMMISSIONER GORDON ENTERS THE BUILDING IN THE WAKE OF THE SHADOWY AND SILENT VIGIL ANTE. AS HE COMES THROUGH THE DOORS HE LOOKS TOWARDS US AND TOWARDS THE BATMAN IN THE FOREGROUND, QUICKENING HIS PACE TO KEEP UP WITH THE LONGER-LEGGED AND YOUNGER CRIME-FIGHTER.
No Dialogue.

2.

WE ARE STILL SLIGHTLY BEHIND THE RECEPTIONIST, BUT MAYBE NOW WE HAVE CHANGED ANGLE SO THAT WE ARE LOOKING AT HER OVER HER OTHER SHOULDER. LOOKING PAST

HER, WE CAN SEE THE BATMAN AND GORDON HEADING AWAY FROM US, DEEPER INTO THE BOWELS OF THE ASYLUM, WITH THE BATMAN LEADING THE WAY AND GORDON STILL STRUGGLING TO KEEP UP. THEY ARE HEADING IN ROUGHLY THE DIRECTION THAT THE RECEPTIONIST WAS INDICATING LAST PANEL. IN THE FOREGROUND, THE RECEPTIONIST IS TREMBLING WITH DELAYED SHOCK, MAYBE TRYING TO FISH A CIGARETTE FROM HER PACKET BUT ENDING UP SPILLING THE WHOLE PACK ALL OVER HER DESK AND HER LAP. SEE HOW IT LOOKS TO YOU AND INCLUDE IT IF IT LOOKS OKAY. DESPITE THE PREDOMINANCE OF THE RECEPTIONIST IN THE FOREGROUND, THE MAIN POINT OF THE PANEL IS THE FIGURES OF THE BATMAN AND THE COMMISSIONER VANISHING DOWN THE CORRIDOR IN THE BACKGROUND.

No Dialogue.

PAGE 2.

(PANEL) 3.

NOW WE ARE IN THE DIMLY LIT AND SHADOWY CORRIDORS OF THE ASYLUM, LINED WITH CELL DOORS THAT LEAD OFF TO EITHER SIDE. EACH DOOR LOOKS VERY TOUGH AND REINFORCED, AND MAYBE EACH HAS A LITTLE PLATE AT THE FRONT WITH THE NAME OF THE PERSON DETAINED THEREIN, FOLLOWED BY A NUMBER. PERHAPS, FOR EXAMPLE, WE CAN SEE A PLATE WITH THE LEGEND NIGMA, E. 0722 ON IT SOMEWHERE IN THE FOREGROUND, JUST SO THAT THE READER GETS THE IDEA, WITH THE REST OF THE NAMEPLATES ON THE DOORS TOO FAR AWAY TO BE LEGIBLE. EACH DOOR ALSO HAS A SMALL RECTANGULAR WINDOW WITH THREE STOUT BARS ACROSS IT. SINCE IT IS AFTER LIGHTS-OUT HERE, THERE IS ONLY DARKNESS BEYOND THE BARRED WINDOWS, SAVE FOR WHATEVER NIGHT-LIGHTS THE INMATES MAY BE USING. HERE, WE ARE LOOKING STRAIGHT DOWN THE CORRIDOR FROM ALMOST A FLOOR-LEVEL SHOT. IN THE FOREGROUND, VISIBLE ONLY UP TO THE KNEES, WE SEE THE BOOTS AND LOWER LEGS OF THE BATMAN AS HE WALKS TOWARDS US DOWN THE CORRIDOR, CAPE TRAILING BEHIND HIM. LOOKING BEYOND HIM WE SEE COMMISSIONER GORDON IN ROUGHLY A FULL-FIGURE SHOT AS HE FOLLOWS BEHIND, PUFFING SLIGHTLY AS HE STRUGGLES GAMELY TO CATCH UP. THE ASYLUM CORRIDOR IS LIT BY DIM CEILING LIGHTS ARRANGED AT INTERVALS SO THAT THERE ARE POOLS OF RELATIVE BRILLIANCE INTERSPERSED WITH STRETCHES OF TWILIGHT, IF YOU KNOW THE EFFECT I MEAN. HERE, BATMAN'S FEET WALK REMORSELESSLY TOWARDS US.

No Dialogue.

4.

NOW A HALF-FIGURE TO HEAD AND SHOULDERS SHOT OF BATMAN AND GORDON IN PROFILE AS THEY WALK ACROSS THE PANEL FROM LEFT TO RIGHT IN THE FOREGROUND. BATMAN, IN THE LEAD, HAS ALREADY WALKED ACROSS THE PANEL AND IS ABOUT TO VANISH OUT OF IT'S RIGHT HAND SIDE, WITH THE FRONT OF HIS HEAD ALREADY OFF PANEL AND ONLY THE BACK OF HIS COWL AND CAPE VISIBLE HERE. COMMISSIONER GORDON IS JUST ENTERING THE PANEL OVER TO THE LEFT, THE BACK HALF OF HIM INVISIBLE OFF PANEL AS HE FOLLOWS AFTER THE GRIM AND SILENT CAPED FIGURE. LOOKING BETWEEN THE BATMAN AND GORDON WE GET A GOOD CLEAR SHOT OF THE CELL DOOR THAT THEY ARE JUST PASSING. THE PLATE ON THE FRONT READS DENT, H. 0751. ABOVE THE PLATE IS THE SMALL BARRED WINDOW. ONE OF THE HANDS CLUTCHING THE OUTER BARS FROM INSIDE IS A NORMAL FLESH-TONE PIN. THE OTHER HAND IS A PUTRESCENT AND CONTAMINATED GREEN. FROM THE SHADOWY RECESS BEYOND THE THREE BARS, TWO FACE STARES SILENTLY OUT AT US. THE LIGHT FILTERING IN THROUGH THE CELL WINDOW PICKS OUT ONLY THE DEFORMED HALF OF HIS FACE, PERHAPS, BILIOUS GREEN AND TWISTED INTO A DERANGED SNARL OF MALICE AS HIS MISMATCHED EYES FOLLOW THE PASSAGE OF THE BATMAN AND THE COMMISSIONER ALONG THE GLOOMY CORRIDOR.

No Dialogue

5.

NOW WE SEE THE PANEL FROM TWO FACES' POINT OF VIEW AS HE STANDS WITHIN HIS CELL, PEERING ROUND AS FAR AS HE CAN TO WATCH THE PAIR AS THEY TURN RIGHT DOWN AN ADJACENT CORRIDOR. ALL WE CAN SEE OF TWO FACE HERE ARE HIS HANDS AS THEY HAND ONTO THE CELL WINDOW'S BARS IN THE FOREGROUND. LOOKING THROUGH THE BARS WE CAN SEE ACROSS THE CORRIDOR AND DOWN THE TURN-OFF THAT THE BATMAN AND GORDON HAVE TAKEN. THE BATMAN IS STILL IN THE LEAD AND FACING AWAY FROM US, ALMOST OUT OF SIGHT. GORDON IS STRUGGLING ALONG BEHIND, MAYBE DARTING AN ANXIOUS GLANCE BACK OVER HIS SHOULDER TOWARDS US AND THE DEFORMED CRIMINAL FOLLOWING THE COMMISSIONER WITH HIS EYES FROM WITHIN THE CELL.

No Dialogue

6.

NOW, OVER IN THE RIGHT OF THE FOREGROUND WE CAN SEE A LITTLE OF THE DOOR OF A MAXIMUM SECURITY CELL. THE

PLATE ON THE DOOR SAYS NAME UNKNOWN 0801. IMMEDIATELY BEYOND THE DOOR, STANDING AT EASE WITH HIS BACK TURNED TO THE WALL THE DOOR IS SET INTO, WE CAN SEE SOME OF A SECURITY GUARD. UP TO YOU WHETHER WE CAN SEE HIS HEAD, OR WHETHER HE'S SO CLOSE THAT ITS OFF PANEL ABOVE. THE MAIN THING ABOUT HIM IS THE BUNCH OF KEYS HANGING FROM HIS BELT BESIDE THE POWERFUL-LOOKING HOLSTERED HANDGUN. HE STANDS IN PROFILE, FACING TOWARDS THE LEFT OF THE PANEL FROM THE RIGHT. LOOKING PAST HIM WE CAN SEE THE BATMAN AND COMMISSIONER GORDON APPROACHING US DOWN THE LONG STRAIGHT CORRIDOR, WITH THE BATMAN STILL IN THE LEAD. BATMAN, AS HE WALKS, IS DIRECTLY BENEATH ONE OF THE OVERHEAD CEILING LIGHTS, SO THAT THE TOP OF HIS HOOD AND HIS SHOULDERS AND LIT, BUT SO THAT HIS FACE AND THE REST OF HIS BODY ARE A MASS OF SOLID SHADOW. GORDON, SOMEWHAT BETTER LIT AND MORE VISIBLE, FOLLOWS ALONG BEHIND.

No Dialogue.

7.

NOW WE ARE BEHIND THE BATMAN'S RIGHT SHOULDER AS HE FACES AWAY FROM US, SO THAT ALL WE SEE OF HIM IS A LITTLE OF THE BACK OF HIS HEAD AND ONE SHOULDER, OVER TOWARDS THE LEFT OF THE PANEL. LOOKING PAST THIS, WE CAN SEE A THREE-QUARTER LENGTH SHOT OF THE SECURITY GUARD AS HE WILLINGLY UNLOCKS THE CELL DOOR FOR THE BATMAN. PERHAPS HE EVEN SALUTES WITH ONE HAND AS HE UNLOCKS THE CELL DOOR WITH THE OTHER. ALSO IN THE MIDDLEGROUND, BUT A LITTLE MORE OVER TOWARDS THE RIGHT, WE CAN SEE COMMISSIONER GORDON. HE IS LOOKING UP AT THE LARGELY OFF PANEL BATMAN WITH A SOMEHOW TROUBLED LOOK, TRYING TO DEDUCE SOMETHING FROM BATMAN'S EXPRESSION. THE SECURITY GUARD, CONVERSELY, LOOK ALMOST HONOURED TO BE OPENING A DOOR FOR THE FAMOUS BATMAN, PERHAPS STARING IN AWED ADORATION.

No Dialogue.

8.

WE ARE NOW INSIDE THE CELL, LOOKING TOWARDS THE PARTLY OPEN DOOR FROM THE SEMI-DARKNESS WITHIN AS THE BATMAN ENTERS. THE LIGHT OF THE CORRIDOR BEHIND HIM THROWS HIM INTO SILHOUETTE AS HE STANDS FRAMED IN THE DOORWAY, ONCE MORE RENDERING HIS FACE INVISIBLE. MAYBE BEHIND HIM, THROUGH THE CLOSING DOOR, WE CATCH A GLIMPSE OF THE ASYLUM SECURITY GUARD AS HE PULLS THE DOOR QUICKLY SHUT BEHIND THE BATMAN. AS I SEE THIS

PICTURE, WE ARE PERHAPS LOOKING UP AT BATMAN FROM A SLIGHTLY DEPRESSED ANGLE AS HE ENTERS WITH THE LIGHT BEHIND HIM.

No Dialogue.

9.

WE HAVE NOW PULLED BACK FURTHER INTO THE CELL SO THAT WE CAN SEE THE BATMAN FULL FIGURE AS HE STANDS FACING US IN FRONT OF THE NOW-COMpletely-CLOSED DOOR, STILL WITH THE LIGHT BEHIND HIS HEAD AS HE STANDS WITH THE BARRED WINDOW POSITIONED NEATLY BEHIND HIS COWL, THROWING HIS FACE INTO DARKNESS. RIGHT IN THE FOREGROUND OF THE PANEL WE SEE PART OF THE SURFACE OF A FOLD-DOWN CARD TABLE THAT HAS BEEN FOLDED DOWN FROM THE CELL WALL AND IS LIT FROM ABOVE BY THE RADIANCE OF AN OFF-PANEL WALL LAMP, WEAK AND YELLOWISH AND SICKLY. ENTERING THE PANEL OVER ON THE RIGHT ARE THE HANDS OF THE PERSON WHO IS SITTING JUST OFF PANEL IN THAT DIRECTION, FACING TOWARDS THE LEFT AND DEALING OUT A HAND OF PATIENCE. THE CARDS, SOME OF WHICH ARE VISIBLE TO US HERE, ARE SPREAD OUT IN COLUMNS ON THE SMALL TABLE BEFORE HIM, AND HE IS SYSTEMATICALLY PICKING UP CARDS FROM THE DECK AND LAYING THEM DOWN ON ONE OF THE COLUMN. HERE, WE SEE HIM WITH A CARD POISED, ABOUT TO LAY IT DOWN ON THE END ROW. HIS HANDS HAVE LONG AND CLEVER FINGERS AS THEY DEFTLY MANIPULATE THE CARDS. THEY ARE ALSO CHALK-WHITE AND COMPLETELY DRAINED OF ANY TRACE OF LIVING COLOR. BATMAN JUST STANDS BY THE CELL DOOR AND STARES AT BOTH US AND THE OFF-PANEL OWNER OF THE HANDS.

No Dialogue.

PAGE 3.

(PANEL) 1.

THIS IS A FULL PAGE SPLASH PICTURE. WE HAVE CHANGED ANGLES SINCE THE LAST PANEL ON PAGE TWO SO THAT WE ARE STANDING WITH OUR BACKS TO THE NOW OFF PANEL DOOR, LOOKING TOWARDS THE FOLD DOWN TABLE SO THAT WE CAN SEE THE TABLE, THE CARDS, THE WALL LAMP SET JUST ABOVE IT AND THE TALL AND GANGLY FIGURE SITTING HUNCHED ON THE LEFT HAND SIDE OF THE TABLE, PLAYING CARDS. IT IS THE JOKER. HE SITS WITH HIS HEAD AND SHOULDERS LEANING BACK SLIGHTLY, SO THAT ONLY HIS WHITE HANDS ARE WITHIN THE CIRCLE OF THE STRONGEST LIGHT CAST BY THE SMALL WALL LAMP AS IT SHINES ONTO THE TABLE TOP. BEYOND THAT, HIS FORM IS MORE SHADOWY, ALTHOUGH WE CAN STILL SEE

CERTAIN KEY DETAILS PICKED OUT BY THE WEEK LIGHTS THE GREEN GLINT OF THE HAIR AT HIS BROW-LINE WHERE THE LIGHT CATCHES IT, AND THE WHITENESS OF THE FOREHEAD BENEATH, WE CAN SEE A LITTLE OF THE BONE-WHITE BRIDGE OF THE NOSE, AND SIMILARLY THE UPPER CHEEKS, ABOVE THE BONE. THE EYES, HOWEVER, AS WELL AS THE MOUTH AND THE LOWER FACE IN GENERAL, ARE IN SHADOW. OVER ON THE RIGHT, WE SEE BATMAN AS HE DRAGS THE ROOM'S ONLY OTHER CHAIR UP TOWARDS THE SMALL TABLE, PREPARING TO SIT DOWN. HE IS STILL STANDING HERE, DRAGGING THE CHAIR INTO POSITION WITH ONE HAND. HIS UPPER CHEST, HEAD AND SHOULDERS ARE ALL IN SHADOW, WELL ABOVE THE LIGHT CAST BY THE RELATIVELY LOW DOWN WALL LAMP MOUNTED JUST ABOVE THE TABLE. THE WHOLE TOP OF THE PAGE IS SOLID BLACK, WITH THE ACTUAL IMAGE AREA QUITE SMALL AND DOWN TOWARDS THE BOTTOM, IF THAT LOOKS OKAY. THE OPENING QUOTE, RATHER THAN BEING IN A REGULAR CAPTION BOX, IS LETTERED IN WHITE ON BLACK ONTO THE SOLID AND APPRESSIVE DARKNESS AT THE TOP FO THE PAGE. AS THE BATMAN PULLS UP A CHAIR, THE JOKER COMPLETELY IGNORES HIM AND CONTINUES TO PLAY PATIENCE, NOT EVEN LOOKING UP AS THE BATMAN DRAGS HIS CHAIR UP TO THE TABLE. HIS WHITE HANDS DEFTLY SNAP A CARD DOWN ONTO ONE OF THE ROWS, HENCE THE SOURCE OF THE SMALL SOUND EFFECT, WHICH IS THE FIRST SOUND THAT WE'VE HEARD. THE TITLE AND THE CREDITS ALL GO SOMEWHERE DOWN TOWARDS THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE.

CAPT. (WHITE ON BLACK): There were these two guys in a lunatic asylum...

(SMALL) F.L. (CARD BEING PLAYED): fnap

TITLE: THE KILLING JOKE

CREDITS: ALAN MOORE: WRITER * BRIAN BOLLAND: ARTIST *

LEN WEIN: EDITOR * _____: COLORIST * _____:

LETTERER

PAGE 4.

(PANEL) 1.

NOW ANOTHER NINE PANELS. IN THIS FIRST ONE WE ARE LOOKING ACROSS THE TABLE THROUGH THE EYES OF THE NOW OFF-PANEL JOKER AS HE STARES ACROSS AT THE BATMAN, WHO IS NOW SEATED ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE TABLE, HIS BLACK FINNED GLOVES RESTING CALMLY ON THE TABLETOP. BEYOND THAT, WE CAN ONLY SEE A GLIMPSE OF HIS CHEST, MAYBE WITH THE JET BLACK CLOAK HANGING OPEN SLIGHTLY TO REVEAL A SLIVER OF THE YELLOW AND BLACK EMBLEM BENEATH, ALTHOUGH NOT ALL OF IT. OTHER THAN THAT, THE

REST OF BATMAN IS COMPLETELY INVISIBLE IN THE SHADOWS BEYOND THE HALO OF THE LAMP MOUNTED ABOVE THE CARD TABLE. PERHAPS IN THE DEEP SHADOWS OBSCURING BATMAN'S HEAD AND SHOULDERS WE CAN SEE TWO GLINTS OF WHITE WHERE HIS EYES ARE SITUATED AS THE WALL LAMP'S LIGHT REFRACTS FROM THE MIRROR CONTACT LENSES THAT HE WEARS TO MAKE HIS EYE SLITS LOOK BLANK AND WHITE ALL THE TIME. IN THE FOREGROUND, ALL WE CAN SEE OF THE JOKER ARE HIS WHITE HANDS ENTERING THE PICTURE IN THE FOREGROUND, PICKING UP ANOTHER CARD AND ABOUT TO LAY IT DOWN IN THE SAME FASHION AS BEFORE, STILL SEEMINGLY OBLIVIOUS TO THE SHEER PRESENCE OF THE HUGE DARK FIGURE SITTING OPPOSITE HIM ACROSS THE CARD TABLE. ALSO VISIBLE ON THE TABLE..AND I PROBABLY SHOULD HAVE MENTIONED THIS ON PAGE TWO OR THREE, FOR WHICH APOLOGIES..ARE THE TWO DISCARDED JOKERS FROM THE BACK THAT THE PALE LUNATIC IS PLAYING WITH, LAYING FACE UP ON TOP OF ONE ANOTHER. THE BLANCHED AND LEERING FACE ON THE CARD IS PERHAPS MODELED AFTER THE ORIGINAL PLAYING CARD DESIGN THAT GAVE JERRY ROBBINS THE IDEA FOR THE JOKER, WHICH I BELIEVE IS ILLUSTRATED IN STERANKOS FIRST BOOK OF COMICS. THE FACE IS EVIL AND PERVERTED AND DEPRAVED.

THE BATMAN: Hello.

THE BATMAN: I came to talk.

2.

CHANGE ANGLE SO THAT WE'RE NOW JUST BEHIND THE BATMAN, OR BETTER STILL, LOOKING THROUGH HIS EYES SO THAT WE CAN ONLY SEE HIS WEIRILY GAUNTLETED HANDS RESTING CALMLY ON THE CARD-COVERED TABLETOP, ACROSS THE TABLE, WE SEE THE JOKER SITTING SO THAT ONCE AGAIN ONLY HIS BROW, HAIRLINE, NOSE AND UPPER CHEEKS ARE ILLUMINATED, HIS EYES AND HIS EXPRESSION STILL INVISIBLE. WE CAN SEE HIS WHITE HANDS. ONE OF THEM PLACES THE CARD WE SAW HIM PICK UP LAST PANEL DOWN ON THE END OF A ROW, WITH A SMALL ACCOMPANYING SOUND EFFECT. HE CONTINUES TO COMPLETELY IGNORE THE BATMAN.

(SMALL) F.X. (CARD BEING PLAYED): fnap

PAGE 4.

(PANEL) 3.

NOW WE LOOK DOWN ON THEM FROM ABOVE PERHAPS AS THEY SIT FACING EACH OTHER ACROSS THE TABLE. ALL WE CAN REALLY SEE OF THE JOKER ARE HIS WHITE HANDS AND A LITTLE OF THE TOP OF HIS HEAD AS HE SITS THERE BENEATH US. HE IS

JUST PICKING UP ANOTHER CARD, ABOUT TO LAY IT DOWN. HE STILL SEEMS TOTALLY OBLIVIOUS TO THE BATMAN'S PRESENCE.

THE BATMAN: I've been THINKING lately. About you and me.

THE BATMAN: About what's going to HAPPEN to us, in the END.

THE BATMAN: We're going to KILL each other, aren't we?

4.

NOW A TABLE TOP SHOT, LOOKING FROM A POINT ON THE TABLE TOWARDS THE DOOR. IN SOME WAYS, THIS SINGLE IMAGE CONTAINS THE WHOLE OF THE FORTHCOMING STORY IN IT, AT LEAST SYMBOLICALLY, SO I SUPPOSE I'D BETTER DESCRIBE IT CAREFULLY. IN THE FOREGROUND WE HAVE THE TABLE. THE BATMAN'S HANDS ENTER FROM THE LEFT OF THE PICTURE, LAYING CALMLY ON THE TABLE TOP, WHILE THE JOKER'S BLEACHED HANDS ENTER THE PANEL FROM THE RIGHT, AND ARE JUST LAYING THE CARD WE SAW HIM PICK UP LAST PANEL DOWN WITH A SNAP. LOOKING BEYOND THIS, ALONG THE LENGTH OF THE FAIRLY SMALL CELL, WE SEE THE CELL DOOR AND THE BARRED WINDOW. LOOKING IN THROUGH THE WINDOW, HIS FACE ANXIOUS AS HE GLANCES INTO THE CELL AS IF TO CHECK UP ON BATMAN, WE SEE COMMISSIONER GORDON'S FACE. THE TWO ADVERSARIES FACE EACH OTHER ACROSS THE CARD TABLE IN THE FOREGROUND WHILE LOOKING BETWEEN THEM WE SEE GORDON'S FACE STARING OUT FROM BEHIND BARS. ALSO ON THE TABLE IN THE FOREGROUND WE SEE THE TWO DISCARDED JOKERS, LYING THERE FACE UP AND LEERING HORRIBLY AT THE DARK CEILING OVERHEAD.

(SMALL) F.X. (CARD BEING PLAYED) : fnap

5.

NOW WE REVERSE OUR LAST PANEL SO THAT WE ARE OUTSIDE THE BARRED WINDOW, IN THE CORRIDOR AND LOOKING IN THROUGH THE WINDOW (WHICH FILLS MOST OF THE PANEL) SO THAT WE SEE THE BATMAN AND THE JOKER SITTING FACING EACH OTHER ACROSS THE TABLE AT THE OTHER END OF THE ROOM, BOTH FULL FIGURE BUT NOT LIT WELL ENOUGH TO GIVE AWAY ANY FACIAL DETAILS. THE BATMAN CONTINUES TO TALK CALMLY, SO FAR UNRATTLED BY THE JOKER'S SEEMING OBLIVION TO HIS PRESENCE. THE JOKER PICKS UP ANOTHER CARD, PREPARING TO LAY IT.

THE BATMAN: Perhaps you'll kill me. Perhaps I'll kill you. Perhaps sooner. Perhaps later.

THE BATMAN: I just wanted to know that I'd made a genuine attempt to talk things OVER

THE BATMAN (SAME BALLOON): and AVERT that outcome.

THE BATMAN: Just ONCE.

6.

WE NOW HAVE A SHOT OF ALMOST IDENTICAL TO PANEL ONE IN THAT WE ARE LOOKING THROUGH THE JOKER'S EYES SO THAT WE CAN ONLY SEE HIS HANDS AS HE CALMLY AND DELIBERATELY LAYS ANOTHER CARD DOWN UPON ONE OF THE ROWS. LOOKING ACROSS THE TABLE WE CAN SEE THE BATMAN, AND HE LOOKS AS IF HE'S GRADUALLY STARTING TO GROW IRRITATED. HE IS LEANING FORWARDS, AND WE CAN SEE A LITTLE OF THE LOWER PART OF HIS FACE AS THE MOUTH STARTS TO TURN DOWN INTO ANGRY SCOWL. ON THE TABLE-TOP, HIS HANDS BUNCH INTO HUGE BLACK FISTS.

(SMALL) F.X. (CARD BEING PLAYED): fnap

7.

WE ARE NOW UP AT THE END OF THE TABLE, LOOKING DOWN ITS LENGTH TOWARDS THE WALL AT APPROXIMATELY THE EYE LEVEL OF THE MEN SEATED OFF PANEL TO EITHER SIDE OF IT. ALL WE CAN SEE ARE THEIR HANDS. ONE OF BATMAN'S HANDS SUDDENLY WHIPS INTO THE PICTURE AND CATCHES THE JOKER AROUND ONE SKINNY WHITE WRIST BEFORE HE CAN DRAW HIS ARM BACK. MAYBE THE SUDDEN MOVEMENT DISTURBS A CARD SO THAT IT FLUTTERS THROUGH THE AIR. BATMAN'S BLACK-GAUNTLETED GRIP UPON THE BONY WRIST LOOKS QUITE TIGHT AND QUITE PAINFUL. THE JOKER'S FINGERS FLUTTER OPEN IN ALARM.

(OFF) THE BATMAN: Are you LISTENING to me? It's LIFE AND DEATH that I'm discussing here.

(OFF) THE BATMAN: Maybe MY death...

8.

NOW WE ARE LOOKING THROUGH THE BATMAN'S EYES. ALL WE CAN SEE OF HIM IS HIS LEFT HAND WHICH HAS NOW RELEASED THE JOKER'S WRISTS AND IS INSTEAD POINTING MEANINGFULLY AT THE JOKER ACROSS THE TABLE. THE JOKER, STILL LEANING BACK IN THE SHADOWS, NURSES HIS TENDER WRIST AND GLARES AT THE BATMAN FROM THE SHADOWS, ON BATMAN'S BLACK GLOVE IN THE FOREGROUND THERE IS A SMEAR OF SOME THICK WHITE GREASY SUBSTANCE THAT THE BATMAN DOESN'T APPEAR TO HAVE NOTICED YET, EVEN THOUGH HE READER CAN SEE THE SMEAR CLEARLY.

(OFF) THE BATMAN: ...maybe YOURS.

(OFF) THE BATMAN: I don't fully understand why ours should be such a FATAL relationship, but I don't want your MURDER on my...

PAGE 4.

(PANEL) 9.

NOW WE ARE LOOKING AT BATMAN VERY CLOSE UP FROM THE FRONT SO THAT WE CAN SEE HIS CHEST AND HIS RAISED HANDS AND THE LOWER HALF OF HIS FACE, BE WE CANNOT SEE HIS EYES OR THE REST OF THE UPPER PART OF HIS HEAD. HE IS LOOKING DOWN AT HIS GLOVES AND AT THE THICK WHITE PANCAKE MAKEUP UPON THEM WHERE HE TOUCHED THE JOKER. HIS MOUTH STARTS TO TURN DOWN INTO A SUSPICIOUS SCOWL EVEN AS HIS SENTENCE TRAILS OFF INTO SILENCE. (SMALL) THE BATMAN: ..hands..

PAGE 5.

(PANEL) 1.

SEVEN PANELS ON THIS PAGE, PERHAPS WITH THREE SMALL ONES AT THE TOP, A BIG WIDE DRAMATIC ONE IN THE MIDDLE AND THREE SMALL ONES AGAIN UNDERNEATH THAT. SEE WHAT LOOKS BEST TO YOU. IN THIS FIRST ONE WE ARE LOOKING AT THE TABLE END ON FROM A COUPLE OF FEET AWAY, SO THAT WE SEE BOTH THE PROTAGONISTS MAYBE THREE QUARTER FIGURE, ON EITHER SIDE OF THE TABLE. THE BATMAN IS NOW STANDING, AND IS REACHING COLDLY AND DELIBERATELY ACROSS THE TABLE, WITHOUT SAYING A WORD, TO GRASP THE FRONT OF THE JOKER'S SHIRT OR OVERALL OR WHATEVER PEOPLE WEAR IN ARKHAM, AND SLOWLY TO HAUL THE JOKER FORWARD INTO THE CIRCLE OF LAMPLIGHT CAST BY THE WALL LAMP. THE JOKER, UNABLE TO RESIST THE RELENTLESS TUG OF THE BATMAN'S GRIP ON HIS JACKET FRONT, LOOKS NERVOUS AND TAKEN ABACK AS HE'S DRAGGED FORWARDS INTO THE LIGHT.

"JOKER": H-hey..

2.

SAME ANGLE, BUT NOW WE CLOSE IN A LITTLE SO THAT THE BATMAN IS LARGELY OFF PANEL APART FROM HIS HANDS. WE CAN SEE THE JOKER'S FACE QUITE CLEARLY AS HE'S DRAGGED INTO THE LIGHT. THE HAIR IS GREEN, THE FLESH IS WHITE, THE LIPS ARE RED AND THE FACE IS BONY AND LANTERN JAWED, BUT IT ISN'T THE JOKER. THE EYES AREN'T ANYWHERE NEAR CRAZY ENOUGH. BATMAN'S BLACK-GLOVED HAND DRAGS THE IMPOSTER RELENTLESSLY FORWARDS EVEN AS HIS OTHER HAND ENTERS THE PICTURE AND MOVES TOWARDS THE JOKER'S FACE, FINGERS OUTSTRETCHED AS IF TO STROKE IT. THE JOKER LOOKS UNDERSTANDABLY SCARED SHITLESS.

JOKER: HEY! WAIT a minute! Don't you TOUCH me! I got RIGHTS!

JOKER: You're not allowed to...

PAGE 5.

(PANEL) 3.

WE ARE NOW LOOKING THROUGH THE BATMAN'S EYES SO THAT WE CAN ONLY SEE HIS HANDS AND THE PHONEY JOKER'S FACE AS IT'S DRAGGED INTO THE GLARE OF THE LAMPLIGHT. THE GLOVED HAND THAT WE SAW REACHIGN FOR THE JOKERS FACE LAST PANEL HAS NOW WIPIED IT'S FINGERTIPS IN A LONG SMEAR DOWN ONE SIDE OF THE WHITE FACE, DOWN THE CHEEK AND MAYBE DOWN OVER ONE CORNER OF THE LIPS. THE WHITE GREASE PAINT COMES OFF ON THE TIPS OF BATMAN'S GLOVES, REVEALING THE PERFECTLY ORDINARY PINK SKIN BENEATH. THE RED LIPSTICK IS SMUDGED DOWN HORRIBLY OVER THE CHIN, LIKE BLOOD, AS THE LEATHER GLOVE WIPES ROUGHLY ACROSS IS. THE FAKE JOKER'S EYES ARE OPEN WIDE, THE PUPILS TINY PINPRICKS OF PREGNANT TERROR.

(SMALL) JOKER: ...touch me..

4.

BIG PANEL. FOR THE FIRST TIME WE SEE A GOOD CLEAR SHOT OF THE BATMAN'S FACE AS HE LUNGES ACROSS THE TABLE AND SAVAGELY DRAGS THE FAKE JOKER OUT OF HIS CHAIR AND ACROSS THE TABLE SO THAT THEIR FACES ARE ONLY INCHES APART. THE BATMAN IS A NIGHTMARE FROM HELL, HIS TEETH GRITTED IN A TERRIBLE AND FURIOUS RAGE AND HIS WHITE EYES SMOULDERING LIKE A FURNACE. THE BLACK MASS OF HIS CAPE SHIFTS ABOUT HIM WITH THE SUDDEN MOVEMENT, AND THE CELL DANCES WITH GROTESQUE AND DEFORMED SHADOWS AS THE TWO UNEARTHLY LOOKING CREATURES LOOK FACE TO FACE BENEATH THE DIM LIGHT. THE PHONEY JOKER STARTS TO SCREAM IN BLIND MORTAL TERROR.

THE BATMAN: WHERRRRRE IS HE?

JOKER: AAAAAAAA! Oh GOD, no...

5.

NOW THE THREE SMALL CLOSING PANELS. IN THIS FIRST ONE IN THE SEQUENCE WE CUT TO JUST OUTSIDE THE CELL DOOR, TO WHERE COMMISSIONER GORDON IS WAITING WITH THE UNIFORMED ASYLUM SECURITY GUARD. BOTH THE MEN LOOK STARTLED AS THEY HEAR THE SUDDEN UPROAR ISSUING OUT THROUGH THE BARRED WINDOWS IN THE CELL DOOR. COMMISSIONER GORDON GESTURES URGENTLY AND IMPATIENTLY THAT THE GUARD SHOULD UNLOCK THE DOOR, HIS FACE FULL OF HORROR AS HE GAZES AT THE DOORS BLANK FAÇADE. THE SECURITY MAN LOOKS STARTLED AND OUT OF HIS DEPTH HERE. THE BALLOONS BELONGING TO THE BATMAN AND

THE PSEUDO JOKER ISSUE OUT INTO THE CORRIDOR THROUGH THE BARRED WINDOW IN THE CELL DOOR HERE.

(OFF) THE BATMAN: DO YOU REALISE? Do you realize what you've set FREE? WHERE IS HE?

(OFF) JOKER: EEEEEEEEGH! Get him OFFA me!

GORDON: Dear God, he's gone BERSERK. Open that DOOR, man!

PAGE 5.

(PANEL) 6

NOW WE ARE BACK INSIDE THE CELL. OVER TO THE RIGHT OF THE EXTREME FOREGROUND, THE BATMAN HAS DRAGGED THE FAKE JOKER OUT FROM HIS CHAIR BY THE TALE AND HAS DRAGGED HIM ACROSS THE ROOM TO SLAM HIM SAVAGELY UP AGAINST THE WALL. WE CAN SEE A LITTLE OF THE BACK OF THE BATMAN'S CAPE HANGING DOWN IN THE RIGHT FOREGROUND MAYBE, WITH ONE OF THE PSEUDO JOKER'S TERRIFIED HANDS FLAILING OUT HELPLESSLY AS HE'S PINIONED TO THE WALL BY THE GREAT DARK SLAB OF MASS AND MUSCLE WHOSE TEMPER HE'S AROUSED. LOOKING PAST THIS, OVER IN THE BACKGROUND WE SEE THAT THE DOOR OF THE CELL IS NOW OPEN AGAIN AND THAT COMMISSIONER GORDON IS RUNNING INTO THE CELL, SHOUTING OUT TO THE BATMAN AS HE COMES, HIS FACE TENSE AND ANGRY, THE SECURITY GUARD FOLLOWS A COUPLE OF PACES AFTER HIM, LOOKING EXTREMELY WORRIED. GORDON: OKAY, that's ENOUGH!

GORDON: YOU know the laws regarding mistreatment of INMATES as well as I do! If you harm one HAIR on his HEAD..

7.

FINAL PANEL. WE HAVE MORE OR LESS THE SAME SHOT AS LAST PANEL, EXCEPT WE'VE MAYBE CLOSED IN JUST FRACTIONALLY, WE STILL CANNOT SEE MUCH OF BATMAN, WHO IS OFF THE RIGHT PANEL BORDER, AND WE CAN NO LONGER SEE ANY OF THE HELPLESS PSEUDO JOKER AT ALL. ALL WE SEE OF BATMAN IS ONE BLACK GLOVED HAND REACHING CASUALLY BACK INTO THE PICTURE FROM OFF PANEL RIGHT AND HANDING SOMETHING TO THE STUNNED AND BEWILDERED COMMISSIONER GORDON, WHO HAS STOPPED DEAD IN HIS TRACKS TO LOOK AT WHAT THE BATMAN IS HOLDING OUT FOR HIM TO TAKE. IT IS A BRIGHT GREEN WIG. IT HANGS FROM BETWEEN BATMAN'S BLACK FINGERS LIKE SOME HUGE AND EXOTIC LIME-COLOURED HAIRY SPIDER. GORDON'S HANDS ARE STARTING TO RISE AUTOMATICALLY TO TAKE THE WIG FROM BATMAN, EVEN AS HE GAPES AT IT IN STUNNED AND WIDE-EYED INCOMPREHENSION. THE BATMAN'S BALLOONS ISSUE FROM OFF PIC.

(OFF) THE BATMAN: Commissioner, if you're CONCERNED about it, it's YOURS. Take CARE of it.

(OFF) THE BATMAN: NOW, you whimpering little smear of slime, I'm going to ask you politely just one more TIME...

PAGE 6.

(PANEL) 1.

THERE ARE FIVE PANELS ON THIS PAGE. WE HAVE CHANGED SCENE TO THE GROUNDS OF AN OLD AND WRETCHED DISUSED CARNIVAL ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF GOTHAM, EVEN THOUGH WE CAN'T REALLY SEE MUCH OF THE CARNIVAL ITSELF HERE. ALL WE SEE HERE, IN THE FOREGROUND ARE A PAIR OF SMARTLY TAILORED SLEEVES AND A PAIR OF GLOVED HANDS RESTING ON THE HANDLE OF A WALKING CANE. THE HAND, THE SLEEVES AND THE CANE ALL BELONG TO THE JOKER, WHO IS STANDING JUST OFF PANEL TO THE RIGHT OF THE PICTURE, MAYBE WITH JUST THE FRONT OF HIS JACKET SHOWING. AS TO HOW HE'S ATTIRE, I'LL LEAVE THAT UP TO YOU. I FIGURE HE SHOULD BE DRESSED FOR OUTDOORS ON A NOVEMBER EVENING..MAYBE A LONG TRENCH COAT OR SOMETHING, BUT I'LL LEAVE THE SPECIFICS UP TO YOU, DEPENDING ON WHAT LOOK YOU WANT TO GIVE HIM. IT STRIKES ME THAT THE PURPLE SUIT OF THE JOKERS HAS BEEN AROUND FOR SO LONG, EVEN WITH THE VARIOUS STYLISTIC ADDITIONS MADE BY PEOPLE LIKE NEAL ADAMS AND MARSHALL ROGERS, THAT IS ALMOST AMOUNTS TO A UNIFORM, JUST LIKE REGULAR SUPER HEROES HAVE. THIS SEEMS A PITY, SINCE THERE'S NO REAL REASON WHY THE JOKER SHOULDN'T CHANGE HIS OUTFIT OCCASIONALLY AT ALL. IF YOU WANT, YOU COULD DRESS THE JOKER IN SOMETHING UNLIKE ANYTHING HE'S EVER BEEN SEEN IN BEFORE AND PERHAPS MORE IN KEEPING WITH THE BLACK AND NIHILISTIC MANIAC THAT WE'RE ATTEMPTING TO PORTRAY HERE. THE JOKER AS I SEE HIM IS A CREATURE WHO HAS LOOKED INTO THE ABSOLUTE PITS OF THE HUMAN EXISTENCE AND HAS BEEN DRIVEN TO INSANITY BY WHAT HE SEES THERE. MAYBE YOU COULD SOMEHOW DRESS HIM TO REFLECT THIS AND ALSO COME UP WITH A MORE STYLISH AND STARTLING VISUAL APPROACH AT THE SAME TIME? SEE WHAT YOU THINK ANYWAY, AND IF THE OLD PURPLE SUIT LOOKS BEST THEN PLEASE USE IT. ANYWAY, IN THIS CURRENT PANEL THE JOKER IS MORE OR LESS OFF PANEL OVER ON THE RIGHT, STANDING MOTIONLESS AND STARING AT SOMETHING OFF PANEL OVER ON THE LEFT. WALKING TOWARDS US FROM THE BACKGROUND ACROSS A SCRUBBY FIELD OF DARK GRASS EDGED IN THE FAR BACKGROUND BY A COPSE OF EQUALLY DARK NIGHT-TIME TREES, WE SEE A MAN OF ABOUT THIRTY FIVE, WHOSE NAME IS

MITCHUM. MITCHUM IS A SEEDY AND CRIMINAL ESTATE AGENT WHO SPECIALIZES IN PROPERTY DEALS WITH THE UNDERWORLD. HE TOO IS DRESSED AGAINST THE NOVEMBER CHILL AS HE WALKS ACROSS THE GRASS..WHICH IS MOSTLY MUD AND PUDDLES AND LITTER..TOWARDS THE ELEGANT FIGURE STANDING OFF PANEL IN THE FOREGROUND AND ALSO TOWARDS US. HE HAS HIS HANDS DEEP IN THE POCKET OF HIS CAR COAT OR WHATEVER HE'S WEARING, AND HIS BREATH FOGS ON THE NOVEMBER AIR, HE ATTEMPTS AN UNEASY SMILE OF HOPEFUL CAMARADERIE, DIRECTED AT THE OFF-PANEL FIGURE IN THE FOREGROUND AS HE APPROACHES HIM.

CAP. : "Where IS he?"

MITCHUM: AH! THERE you are!

MITCHUM: Have you had a chance to inspect the PROPERTY and decide if it's what you were LOOKING for?

PAGE 6.

(PANEL) 2.

NOW WE HAVE A BIGGER PANEL, SHOT FROM BEHIND THE FIGURES OF THE JOKER AND OF MITCHUM, WHO HAS NOW APPROACHED THE JOKER SO THAT HE'S ONLY A FEW PACES AWAY, SLIGHTLY TO THE REAR BUT LOOKING IN THE SAME DIRECTION THAT THE JOKER IS LOOKING. ONCE AGAIN, WE CAN ONLY SEE A BACK VIEW OF THE JOKER, JUST STANDING THERE OVER TO THE LEFT OF THE PANEL, MAYBE EVEN WITH HIS HEAD ONCE MORE OFF THE PANEL BORDER, DEPENDING WHAT LOOKS BEST. THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT WE DON'T SEE HIS FACE YET AS HE STARES DIRECTLY AWAY FROM US. MITCHUM, OVER MORE TO THE RIGHT, IS TURNING HIS HEAD SO THAT WE CAN MAYBE SEE HIM IN PROFILE AS HE LOOKS AT THE JOKER WITH A SORT OF QUIZZICAL AND CRESTFALLEN LOOK, HIS SMILE DISSIPATING INTO DISAPPOINTMENT AS HE HEARS THE JOKER'S OPINION OF HIS PROPERTY. SAID PROPERTY IS WHAT WE ARE LOOKING AT AS WE GAZE BETWEEN THE TWO FIGURES IN THE FOREGROUND. WE SEE THE FRONT OF THE RUINED AND ABANDONED AMUSEMENT PARK/FUNFAIR/CARNIVAL OR WHATEVER WITH IT'S OPEN FRONTED STALLS AND IT'S SIDESHOWS AND ITS PEELING POSTERS AND PAINTWORK AND ITS LONELY LITTLE CLUSTERS OF COIN-OPERATED AMUSEMENT ARCADE MACHINES. I DON'T REALLY CARE WHAT YOU SHOW HERE, SO LONG AS WE GET A GOOD ATMOSPHERIC INTRODUCTORY SHOT OF THIS GROTESQUE AND EVIL-LOOKING RUN DOWN CARNIVAL. IT LOOKS DIRTY AND DARK AND SORDID AND GAUNTED, LOOSE SHEETS OF DAMP AND SEMI-ROTTED TARPAULIN FLAPPING MOURNFULLY FROM SOME OF THE STALLS AND RIDES. SINCE WE NEED TO SEE BOTH A LAUGHING

SAILOR MACHINE AND A POSTER ADVERTISING THE FREAK SHOW IN FAIRLY CLOSE PROXIMITY TO EACH OTHER IN OUR NEXT -BUT-ONE PANEL, MAYBE YOU COULD INTRODUCE THEM BY SQUEEZING THEM INTO THE BACKGROUND HERE, JUST TO GIVE A HIT OF SOLID VISUAL CONTINUITY. THE ODD LEAF BLOWS PAST, AND, AS I SHOULD HAVE POINTED OUT LAST PANEL, IT IS STILL RAINING, ALTHOUGH PERHAPS A LITTLE LESS SO THAT WHEN WE SAW BATMAN ARRIVING AT THE ASYLUM ON PAGE ONE, IT LOOKS GRIM AND WINDSWEPT AND DERELICT.

JOKER: Well, it's GARISH, UGLY, and DERELICTS have used it for a TOILET.

JOKER: The RIDES are dilapidated to the point of being LETHAL, and could easily MAIM or KILL innocent little CHILDREN.

MITCHUM: Oh. So you don't like it?

3.

NOW WE HAVE OUR FIRST CLOSE UP OF THE JOKER'S FACE. HE LOOKS OUT OF THE PANEL, STARING AT THE OFF PANEL RUIN OF THE CARNIVAL, AND HE SMILES, WRINKLES CREASING THE WHITE FLESH AROUND HIS COLD, DEAD, MALICIOUS EYES AND AROUND THE BLOODY SLASH OF HIS DISTENDED AND SMILING LIPS. HIS BILIOUS GREEN HAIR BLOWS IN THE NIGHT BREEZE AND HE LOOKS SO DELIGHTED THAT HE COULD ALMOST BE IN LOVE. LOOKING OVER THE JOKER'S SHOULDER WE CAN PERHAPS SEE A GLIMPSE OF MITCHUM AS HE LOOKS ON AT THE JOKER, NERVOUSLY AND UNEASILY, FROM THE NEAR BACKGROUND. (INCIDENTALLY, I SHOULD HAVE MENTIONED SOMEWHERE IN MY DESCRIPTION ON THE PREVIOUS TWO PANELS THAT THE JOKER HAS A HAT WITH HIM..MAYBE A SLOUCH HAT OR MAYBE SOMETHING MORE UNCONVENTIONAL. HE ISN'T WEARING IT, BUT HE CARRIES IT WITH HIM AS HE WALKS AROUND ON HIS INSPECTION OF THE CARNIVAL. SORRY I FORGOT ABOUT IT.) HERE, WE SEE HIS GREEN HAIR BLOWING LIKE SEAWEED IN THE BREEZE AS HE SMILES A DEATHLY AND HIDEOUS SMILE OUT OF THE PANEL AT US.

JOKER: Don't LIKE it?

JOKER: I'm CRAZY for it.

4.

NOW, IF THIS COMPOSITION WORKS OUT OKAY, WE HAVE CHANGED ANGLE AND PULLED BACK FROM THE JOKER SLIGHTLY, SEEING HIM HERE AS HE WALKS AMONGST THE VARIOUS SOILED AND SEMI-ROTTED EDIFICES THAT MAKE UP THE DISUSED AMUSEMENT PARK. IN THE BOTTOM FOREGROUND, JUST AS AN INCIDENTAL DETAIL HERE, WE HAVE A DUSTY GLASS CASE CONTAINING ONE OF THOSE AWFUL

'LAUGHING SAILOR' FIGURINES, ITS ROSY PAPER MACHE CHEEKS STARTING TO PEEL AND ROT, ONE EYE ALREADY CAVED IN COMPLETELY AND STAINS ON ITS LITTLE BLUE UNIFORM. LOOKING BEYOND THIS WE SEE MAYBE A THREE QUARTER LENGTH SHOT OF THE JOKER AND MITCHUM AS THE PAIR WANDER THROUGH THE FUNFAIR, WITH MITCHUM FOLLOWING NERVOUSLY BEHIND THE DISTURBING AND GROTESQUE WHITE FACED FIGURE, ANXIOUSLY TRYING TO FINALIZE THE DETAILS OF THE PURCHASE. THE JOKER, AS HE STANDS HERE IS FACING SLIGHTLY AWAY FROM US. HE HAS HIS CANE UNDER HIS ARM AND HIS HAT IN HIS GLOVED HANDS, AND HE IS LOOKING UP AT A TORN AND ANCIENT OLD FREAK SHOW POSTER UP ON A DISPLAY BY ONE OF THE BOOTHS OVER IN THE BACK GROUND. ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT SEE IT TOO CLEARLY HERE MAYBE, ONE OF THE MAIN ATTRACTIONS FEATURED ON THE POSTER IS A FAT LADY. THERE IS A PICTURE OF HER, OBESE AND MOUNTAINOUS, SEATED ON A STOOL, WITH THE LEGEND "SEE THE FAT LADY!" AT THE TOP AND "GALS, BE GLAD IT AIN'T YOU!" LETTERED ALONG THE BOTTOM, UNDER THE PICTURE. LIKE I SAY, THIS WON'T BE TERRIBLY CLEAR AND VISIBLE HERE, I DON'T SUPPOSE, BUT THE JOKER IS POSITIONED SO THAT HE'S STANDING ALMOST DIRECTLY BETWEEN US AND THE POSTER AS HE GAZES AT IT, HOLDING HIS HAT IN HIS HANDS AND STILL SMILING A SMILE OF REPTILIAN SATISFACTION, NOT LOOKING AT MITCHUM AS HE MAKES HIS REPLY. IN THE FOREGROUND, THE LEPROUS SMILE OF THE SAILOR ECHOES THAT ON THE JOKER'S FACE AS IT STARES OUT OF ITS COBWEBBED AND DIRTY CASE.

MITCHUM: You...? You really want to BUY it? And the PRICE I mentioned, it isn't too STEEP..?

JOKER: Too STEEP? My dear SIR, as I look at it I'm making a KILLING...

5.

FOR THIS FINAL PANEL WE CLOSE IN FROM OUR LAST SHOT UNTIL WE CAN JUST SEE A LITTLE OF THE JOKER'S MIDSECTION AS HE STANDS OVER TOWARDS THE RIGHT OF THE PANEL, LOOKING SLIGHTLY AWAY FROM US TOWARDS THE POSTER WITH HIS HAT VISIBLE CLASPED IN HIS HANDS IN FRONT OF HIM. LOOKING BEYOND HIS DECAPITATED FIGURE WE CAN SEE THE POSTER, WITH THE PICTURE OF THE SEATED FAT LADY OVER TO THE LEFT AND THE LEGENDS QUOTED ABOVE SEE THE FAT LADY AND "GALS, BE GLAD IT AIN'T YOU!"

(OFF) JOKER: ..and ANYWAY, MONEY isn't really a problem.

(OFF) JOKER: Not THESE days.

PAGE 7.

(PANEL) 1.

THESE NEXT TWO PAGES CONSTITUTE OUR FIRST FLASHBACK OF THE ISSUE, SO I SUPPOSE A GENERAL NOTE UPON THE FLASHBACKS IS IN ORDER. I FIGURE IT WOULD LOOK NICE IF THEY WERE VISUALLY DIFFERENT IN APPROACH TO THE MAINSTREAM OF THE BOOK..EITHER BY THE ADOPTION OF A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO THE COLORING OR TO THE INKING OR TO THE PAGE DESIGN OR SOMETHING..I'M SURE YOU KNOW THE SORT OF THING I MEAN. ALSO, SINCE THE NARRATIVE IN THESE FLASHBACK SEQUENCES IS FAIRLY UNBURDENED WITH THE PRESENCE OF PEOPLE IN COSTUMES AND SUPERHEROES IN GENERAL, MAYBE WE CAN TREAT THESE SCENES A BIT MORE REALISTICALLY, EVEN IF IT'S A REALISM THAT BECOMES UNPLEASANTLY UNSETTLING AND DISTURBING AND TINGED WITH INSANITY UPON OCCASIONS. ONCE AGAIN, I SUPPOSE I'M THINKING VERY MUCH OF ERASERHEAD FOR THESE SCENES SHOWING THE POSSIBLE EARLY YEARS OF THE JOKER'S LIFE..AS I SEE IT, THESE FLASHBACK SCENES LOOK AS IF THEY TOOK PLACE ABOUT TWENTY YEARS BEFORE THE EVENTS IN THE REST OF THE BOOK, WHICH COULD MAYBE BE AFFECTED SOLELY BY THE COLOR SCHEME WE USE IF WE STUCK TO YELLOWS OR SENIAS OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. THE SETTINGS ARE ALL COMPOSED WITH HORRIBLY FASCINATING AND YET SORDIDLY MUNDANE DETAILS, ALONG WITH A LOT OF CLAUSTROPHOBIC CLUTTER. IN THESE OPENING SCENES, WE ARE IN THE DESPERATELY GRIM ONE ROOM FLAT SHARED BY THE EARLY MODEL JOKER, BEFORE HIS GHASTLY TRANSFORMATION, AND HIS YOUNG AND PREGNANT WIFE. WHOSE NAME IS JEANNIE. IN THIS FIRST PANEL, WE HAVE A COMPOSITION WHICH MIRRORS ALMOST EXACTLY THAT USED IN THE LAST PANEL ON PAGE SIX. IN THE FOREGROUND, OVER ON THE RIGHT, WE CAN SEE A LITTLE OF THE MIDSECTION OF A YOUNG MAN IN FAIRLY DOWN-AT-HEEL CLOTHING, MOST CONSPICUOUSLY, WE CAN SEE HIS HANDS. THEY ARE PERHAPS A LITTLE GRUBBY, WITH DIRT BENEATH THE FINGERNAILS, BUT BASICALLY THEY SEEM PINK AND UNUSED TO WORK. THE FINGERS ARE LONG, SENSITIVE AND ARTISTIC, AND THE HANDS THEMSELVES SEEM TO BETRAY A SORT OF NERVOUSNESS. HERE , WE SEE THEM NERVOUSLY HOLDING A BATTERED OLD TRILBY THAT LOOKS AS IF IT'S LONG SINCE LOST ITS WAR WITH THE RAIN. THE HANDS CLUTCH THE BRIM, TOYING WITH IT UNCOMFORTABLY AS THE OFF PANEL PERSON STANDS THERE HOLDING HIS HAT AT WAIST OR CROTCH LEVEL, WHEREVER WE SAW THE JOKER HOLDING HIS HAT IN THE LAST PANEL OF PAGE SIX. LOOKING BEYOND THIS,

WE CAN SEE THE TERRIBLE CRAMPED UNTIDY ROOM THAT THE YOUNG MAN AND HIS WIFE SHARE. THE WALLPAPER IS PEELING AND WAS IN ANY CASE AWFUL TO START WITH. IN THE ROOM THERE IS A WASHBASIN, A SMALL GAS STOVE, TWO CHAIRS A SMALL TABLE AND A CRAMPED LOOKING DOUBLE BED THAT WOULD PERHAPS SLEEP ONE PERSON COMFORTABLY. THE ROOM IS SO SMALL THAT WE CAN PROBABLY EVEN SEE A LOT OF THIS DETAIL IN THE FIRST PANEL. THERE IS A SMALL WINDOW IN THE ROOM, WITH GRIMY GLASS AND FADED CURTAINS THAT ONCE HAD A PATTERN AND NOW BARELY RETAIN ITS GHOST. THE WINDOW LOOKS OUT ONTO A RED BRICK WALL SITUATED SIX FEET AWAY ACROSS THE ALLEY. THE ROOM IS LITTERED WITH ALL SORTS OF STUFF..FOOD, NEWSPAPERS, DIRTY WASHING. MAYBE THERE IS A LINE HANGING SOME WHERE IN THE ROOM..MAYBE OVER A RADIATOR.. ON WHICH SOME RECENTLY WASHED MENS UNDERWEAR (THE BIG WHITE BAGGY OLD FASHIONED KIND THAT MY FATHER USED TO ENJOY AND PROBABLY STILL DOES FOR ALL I KNOW OF THE MATTER) IS HANGING TO DRY. THERE IS A SMALL AND INEFFECTIVE-LOOKING ELECTRIC FIRE, PERHAPS, OR ANY OTHER MUNDANE AND SORDID-LOOKING DETAILS THAT YOU FEEL LIKE THROWING IN. SITTING TOWARDS THE LEFT, UPON ONE OF THE WOODEN CHAIRS POSITIONED MORE OR LESS EXACTLY THE SAME AS THE FAT LADY WAS UPON THE FREAK SHOW POSTER, WE SE THE YOUNG MAN'S WIFE, JEANNIE. SHE IS SIX MONTHS PREGNANT, AND OBVIOUSLY HASN'T BOTHERED TO DRESS THAT MORNING, STILL WEARING HER HOUSECOAT, NIGHT GOWN AND SLIPPERS. SHE LOOKS QUITE SICKLY AND WASHED OUT, AND THE FACT THAT HER BODY IS NATURALLY QUITE SMALL AND SLIGHT TENDS TO EMPHASISE THE STATE OF HER PREGNANCY. HER HAIR IS LONG AND LANK AND GREASY-LOOKING, AND WHILE SHE ISN'T UNATTRACTIVE, SHE'S CERTAINLY NO BEAUTY. C'MON BRIAN, YOU COMPLACENT OLD BASTARD, HERE'S A CHALLENGE FOR YOUR JADED SENSIBILITIES: DRAW AN AVERAGE-LOOKING WOMAN. SHE LOOKS UP WITH A HOPEFUL EXPRESSION AS THE YOUNG MAN ENTERS THE ROOM, HAT IN HAND, UP IN THE FOREGROUND.

JEANNIE: Well?

JEANNIE: How did it GO? Did they like your ACT?

PAGE 7.

(PANEL) 2.

NOW THE MAN HAS CROSSED THE ROOM SLIGHTLY AND WE HAVE CHANGED ANGLES SO THAT THE WOMAN IS SEATED IN THE FOREGROUND AND WE ARE LOOKING PAST HER AT THE MAN AS HE STANDS THERE WITH HIS BACK TO US, HANGING UP

HIS HAT AND MAYBE HIS JACKET UPON A COAT PEG, OR PERHAPS JUST ON THE BACK OF A CHAIR IF THERE ARE NO COAT PEGS. EVEN THOUGH HE HAS HIS BACK TO US SO THAT WE CAN'T SEE HIS FACE WE CAN STILL SEE MORE OF HIM THAN WE COULD LAST PANEL..HE'S VERY TALL AND LANKY AND GANGLY, AND HE DOESN'T REALLY CARRY HIS UNGAINLY BODY TO THE BEST EFFECT, AS IF HE FEELS AWKWARD IN IT. HE'S MAYBE TWENTY TWO YEARS OLD, WITH A FAIRLY UNRULY MOP OF BLACK HAIR THAT'S CUT IN SOME SORT OF NEBULOUS STYLE VAGUELY REMINISCENT OF THE DEPRESSION, PERHAPS SHAVED SLIGHTLY AT THE SIDES AND THE BACK OF THE NECK. SEE WHAT LOOKS BEST. THE YOUNG MAN MUMBLES TO THE COAT PEGS AS HE REPLIES TO HIS WIFE, NOT LOOKING AT HER. IN THE FOREGROUND, ALTHOUGH JEANNIE IS FACING MOSTLY AWAY FROM US, WE CAN STILL SEE A LITTLE OF HER FACE. SHE LOOKS SLIGHTLY CRESTFALLEN. (I SHOULD HAVE MENTIONED LAST PANEL THAT THERE IS EITHER A HANGING WALL MIRROR, OLD FASHIONED AND CRACKED, OR PERHAPS A WALL MOUNTED BATHROOM CABINET WITH A MIRROR SET INTO THE FRONT, UP ON THE WALL ABOVE JEANNIE'S HEAD, BEHIND HER AS SHE SITS OVER BY THE WALL. SINCE WE'RE BEHIND HER HERE THIS MIRROR OR CABINET ISN'T VISIBLE IN THIS PANEL, BUT I THOUGHT I'D BETTER MENTION IT ANYWAY.)

YOUNG MAN: Well, they, uh..they SAID they might CALL me.

YOUNG MAN: I DUNNO. I, I got NERVOUS and messed up a PUNCHLINE.

JEANNIE: Oh.

3.

WE CLOSE IN NOW UPON THE YOUNG MAN AS HE WHEELS ROUND ANGRILY ON HIS WIFE SO THAT WE SEE HIM FULL-FACE FOR THE FIRST TIME. HE ISN'T SO MUCH ANGRY AS DESPERATE AND UPSET AND DEPRESSED, AND HIS EYES LOOK MISERABLE EVEN AS HE SNAPS AGGRESSIVELY AT HIS WIFE. HE IS LONG-FACED AND LANTERN JAWED, BUT STILL HAS A LOOK OF INNOCENCE ABOUT HIM. HE'S PROBABLY NEVER BEEN AND NEVER WILL BE CALLED A HANDSOME MAN, BUT THE FACE HAS A SORT OF YOUTHFUL HONESTY ABOUT IT, DESPITE IT'S PECULIARITIES, AND IS NOT TOTALLY UNLIKABLE OR UNSYMPATHETIC. ABOVE ALL, IT LOOKS WORRIED AND TWITCHY AND NERVOUS, AND WE CAN PERHAPS IMAGINE HOW SUCH A FRAIL AND EMINENTLY MOCKABLE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AS A BOY MIGHT HAVE EASILY LEAD TO SOMEONE DEVELOPING A LINE OF PATTERN TO FORESTALL A BEATING ALONG WITH A GENERAL NEUROTICISM AND SENSE OF ISOLATION, PURELY THROUGH BEING FRIENDLESS. WE DON'T REALLY HAVE TO SEE

JEANNIE IN THIS PANEL, AND HER BALLOON CAN
ISSUE FROM OFF PANEL, UNLESS YOU PARTICULARLY FEEL LIKE
DRAWING HER. HERE, OUR MAIN EMPHASIS IS ON THE FACE OF
THE YOUNG MAN AS HE TURNS ROUND AND SNAPS AT HIS WIFE,
HIS EYES WOUNDED AND HURT AND LOOKING FOR A FIGHT.
ABOVE THE SCENE, A FLY SPECKED BARE LIGHT BULB STARES
DOWN, LYNCHED ON THE END OF A DIRTY BROWN FLEX THAT
HANGS FROM THE PEELING WHITEWASH OF THE CEILING.
YOUNG MAN: What do you MEAN, "Oh"?
(OFF?) JEANNIE: I..I didn't mean ANYTHING.
YOUNG MAN: Yes you did. The way you SAID it: "Oh". Like THAT.

4.

NOW WE HAVE ROUGHLY A SIDE ON SHOT OF THE TWO OF
THEM, BOTH MORE OR LESS FULL FIGURE. JEANNIE IS SEATED
OVER TO THE LEFT, IN PROFILE, FACING RIGHT. THE YOUNG
MAN IS OVER TO THE RIGHT OF PANEL, LOOKING ANGRILY AND
DISTRAUGHTEDLY DOWN AT JEANNIE HAVING CROSSED THE
TINY ROOM TOWARDS HER SINCE LAST PANEL. I DON'T SEE HIM
AS A VIOLENT MAN, SO HIS FISTS AREN'T BUNCHED UP OR
ANYTHING LIKE THAT. THE LONG AND NERVOUS HANDS JUST
FLAP AROUND AGITATEDLY AS HE REMONSTRATES. JEANNIE
TURNS HER HEAD TO ONE SIDE, AWAY FROM HIM AND TOWARDS
US, CHEEKS FLUSHING WITH ANGER. BEHIND THEM, THE UGLY
ROOM SITS AND LISTENS, ABSORBING EVERY WORD.

JEANNIE: Jesus, all I SAID was...

YOUNG MAN: You said "OH". As in "OH, so you didn't get a JOB?" As
in "OH, so how are we going to feed the BABY?"

YOUNG MAN: You think I'M not worried about that?

5.

NOW WE ARE BEHIND AND FRACTIONALLY ABOVE THE YOUNG
MAN AS HE STANDS THERE FACING HIS WIFE, LOOKING DOWN
OVER HIS BONEY SHOULDER AT HER. AS HE STANDS THERE, I
FIGURE HE HAS HIS HEAD TURNED TO ONE SIDE, PROBABLY THE
LEFT, HIS EYES SQUINCHED SHUT AND HIS TEETH GRITTED IN
IMPOTENT SELF-LOATHING AND FUTILE ANGER. NOW HE MAYBE
BUNCHES HIS FIST UP, BUT THE ANGER IS OBVIOUSLY
DIRECTED AT HIMSELF RATHER THAN HIS WIFE. IN THE
BACKGROUND, JEANNIE LOOKS UP AT HIM. THE CROSSNESS HAS
GONE FROM HER FACE TO BE REPLACED BY A SORT OF PAINED
CONCERN. SHE WINCES AS IF IN EMPATHY WITH THE PAIN HE IS
OBVIOUSLY FEELING.

YOUNG MAN: You think, you think I don't CARE, that it's all a big
JOKE to me or something...

PAGE 7.

(PANEL) 5. (FROM OVER)

YOUNG MAN: Jeez, I have to go, I have to go and STAND up there, and nobody LAUGHS, and you think, you think I...

6.

FINAL PANEL. ANOTHER SIDE ON SHOT FROM SOME FEET BACK. THE YOUNG MAN SINKS TO HIS KNEES, RAPPING HIS ARMS AROUND HIS WIFE'S PREGNANT BELLS AND PRESSING HIS CHEEK AGAINST IT. HE IS CRYING. JEANNIE LOOKS DOWN MATERNALLY WITH A LOOK OF SOMEHOW PATRONIZING COMPASSION, AND STOKED HIS HAIR AS IF HE WERE A CHILD WITH A BRUISED KNEE.

YOUNG MAN: Oh GOD.

YOUNG MAN: Oh God, I'm SORRY...

JEANNIE: Oh BABY...

PAGE 8.

(PANEL) 1.

NOW WE HAVE A SHOT WHICH CLOSES IN UPON OUR LAST FULL FIGURE PANEL SO THAT NOW ALL WE REALLY SEE IS THE YOUNG MAN'S BLEAK-EYED AND TEAR-STREAKED FACE AS IT RESTS AGAINST THE SWELL OF HIS WIFE'S BELLY. APART FROM HER BELL, ALL WE CAN SEE OF JEANNIE IS HER HAND ENTERING THE PICTURE FROM ABOVE, STILL STROKING HIS HAIR AND CALMING HIM.

YOUNG MAN: I don't mean to take it out on YOU. You're sub-suffering ENOUGH, being married to a LOSER.

JEANNIE: Honey, that's not..

YOUNG MAN: It's TRUE. I can't SUPPORT you. O Jeannie, what are we going to DO?

2.

NOW WE HAVE A SHOT THAT SHOWS THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRCASE IN THE LODGING HOUSE THAT THE YOUNG COUPLE ARE CURRENTLY LIVING AT. WE ARE LOOKING UP AT THE DINGY STAIRCASE TOWARDS THE FIRST LANDING, WHERE WE CAN SEE AN ELECTRIC LIGHT SHINING ON ONE PEELING WALL, BALLOONS BELONGING TO THE YOUNG MAN AND HIS WIFE ISSUE FROM THE TOP OF THE STAIRS, SINCE THEIR ROOM IS ON THE FIRST FLOOR. AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS, PEERING SUSPICIOUSLY UPWARDS FROM THE SHADOWS OF THE DIRTY HALLWAY TOWARDS THE YELLOW-LIT UPSTAIRS LANDING, WE SEE A HIDEOUSLY DECREPIT AND MISERABLE-LOOKING OLD LADY. STARING UPWARDS, SHE SCOWLS, CLUTCHING HER FILTHY HOUSECOAT ABOUT HER. A MANGEY-LOOKING CAT

RUBBING AGAINST HER VARICOSE AND STOCKINGED LEG.

(OFF) JEANNIE: It'll be OKAY.

JEANNIE: JUNIOR won't be here for another THREE MONTHS, and I think MRS. BURKISS will let the RENT go a little longer. She feels SORRY for me.

(OFF) YOUNG MAN: She hates ME.

3.

NOW WE ARE BACK IN THE ROOM. JEANNIE STILL SITS IN HER CHAIR, OVER IN THE FOREGROUND, BUT THE YOUNG MAN HAS RECOVERED HIMSELF AND HAS RISEN AND WALKED TO THE WINDOW. WE SEE HIM HERE WITH HIS BACK TO US AS HE STARES OUT THROUGH THE FILTHY GLASS AT THE RED BRICKS A FEW FEET AWAY. IN THE FOREGROUND, JEANNIE HAS TURNED HER HEAD SLIGHTLY AWAY FROM US TO LOOK TOWARDS HIS BACK.

YOUNG MAN: She comes out into the HALLWAY to SCOWL at me everytime I go UPSTAIRS.

YOUNG MAN: This house stinks of CATLITTER and OLD PEOPLE.

YOUNG MAN: I've got to get you out of here before the BABY comes...

4.

NOW WE ARE OUTSIDE THE FILTHY WINDOW LOOKING IN. MAYBE IT IS RAINING, OUTSIDE IN THE FOREGROUND. LOOKING IN THROUGH THE WINDOW, IN THE FOREGROUND WE SEE THE YOUNG MAN WHO HAS NOW TURNED SO THAT HE IS IN PROFILE TO US ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GLASS. HIS EXPRESSION IS INTENSE AND DETERMINED, AND HIS EYES ARE BURNING AND SERIOUS, DESPITE THE APPARENT LEVITY OF HIS COMMENT. JEANNIE, SITTING THERE BENEATH THE CRACKED MIRROR OR MIRROR-FACED BATHROOM CABINET, IN THE ROOM BEHIND HIM, DOESN'T APPEAR TO SEE THE INTENSITY AND DETERMINATION IN HER HUSBANDS EYES, AND HEARS ONLY HIS JOKE. SHE LAUGHS, AND LOOKS HAPPY, THERE IN HER GRIM LITTLE ROOM.

YOUNG MAN: I just want enough MONEY to get set up in a decent NEIGHBOURHOOD.

YOUNGMAN: There are girls on the STREET who earn that in a WEEKEND without having to tell a single JOKE.

JEANNIE: HA HA HA HA.

5.

THE YOUNG MAN HAS NOW TURNED COMPLETELY AWAY FROM THE WINDOW AND TAKEN A PACE BACK ACROSS THE ROOM TOWARDS HIS SEATED WIFE. WE CAN ONLY SEE A LITTLE OF HIS MID SECTION, WITH ONE OF HIS LONG-FINGERED HANDS

REACHING OUT SLIGHTLY AS JEANNIE REACHES UP TO TAKE HIS HAND AND PULL HIM TO HER, BOTH HER ARMS EXTENDED. SHE SMILES AND LOOKS LOVINGLY UP AT HIM AS SHE REACHES OUT FOR HIM, AND THERE IS A PROMISE OF SEX IN THE AIR, THERE IS THE DISMAL LITTLE BED SIT ROOM. ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT SEE MUCH OF THE YOUNG MAN IN THE FOREGROUND AS WE LOOK DOWN PAST HIM AT HIS WIFE, WE CAN SEE HIS HEAD AND SHOULDERS REFLECTED IN THE MIRROR/BATHROOM CABINET THAT IS MOUNTED ON THE WALL BEHIND HIS WIFE'S HEAD. BECAUSE THE MIRROR, WHATEVER FORM YOU DECIDE IT TAKES, IS FAIRLY DIRTY AND UNCLEARED, THE REFLECTION OF THE YOUNG MAN'S FACE IN IT LOOKS MORE SHADOWY, PARTICULARLY AROUND THE EYE SOCKETS. JEANNIE SMILES.

JEANNIE: Honey, don't WORRY. Not about ANY of it. I still love you, y'know? Job or NO job, you're good in the SACK..

JEANNIE: ..and you know how to make me LAUGH.

6.

IN THIS FINAL PANEL, WE HAVE CUT OUT OF THE FLASHBACK AND THE COLORING/INKING/PANEL DESIGN OR WHATEVER HAS RETURNED TO NORMAL. WE ARE AT THE CARNIVAL AGAIN, STANDING DISUSE UNDER THE NIGHT-TIME NOVEMBER SKY, AND WE HAVE A PANEL ALMOST IDENTICAL IN COMPOSITION TO THE PANEL ABOVE. IN THE RIGHT OF THE FOREGROUND WE SEE A LITTLE OF THE JOKER'S MIDSECTION. LOOKING DOWN PAST HIM SLIGHTLY WE CAN SEE THAT HE IS STANDING LOOKING DOWN UPON THE DIRTY GLASS CASE CONTAINING THE HIDEOUSLY AFFLICTED SAILOR MANNIKIN. WE CAN SEE THE UGLY LITTLE DOLL SITTING THERE AND SMILING UP AT US, AND WE CAN SEE THE LEGEND ON THE FRONT OF ITS CASE IN OLD FASHIONED PENNY ARCADE LETTERING: THE LAUGHING SAILOR, AND THEN NEXT TO THAT OR UNDER IT 'JUST PUT A PENNY IN THE SLOT'. THE JOKER, WHO WE CAN SEE A LITTLE OF IN THE FOREGROUND ON THE RIGHT, IS REACHING OUT WITH ONE HAND AND TRAILING HIS GLOVED FINGERTIPS OVER THE DIRTY GLASS OF THE MACHINE. WE CAN SEE HIS HEAD AND SHOULDERS REFLECTED IN THE GLASS CASE, JUST AS WE SAW THE YOUNG MAN REFLECTED IN THE MIRROR LAST PANEL. THE JOKER'S FACE LOOKS USUALLY SOLEMN AND REFLECTIVE, WITH NO TRACE OF THE USUAL SMILE.

No Dialogue.

PAGE 9.

(PANEL) 1.

NOW WE ARE BACK WITH MR. MITCHUM AND HIS GHASTLY

CLIENT IN THE GROUNDS OF THE DESOLATE ABANDONED CARNIVAL. IN THIS PANEL, MITCHUM IS IN THE FOREGROUND, FACING US. GROTESQUEY, HE IS SITTING UPON ONE OF THOSE LITTLE KIDDIE RIDES THAT ROCK BACK AND FORTH WHEN YOU PUT A COIN IN THE SLOT, AS IF TO DEMONSTRATE ITS STURDYNESS AND STABILITY. HE GRINS INDULGENTLY TO HIMSELF. THE ACTUAL DESIGN OF THE RIDE SHOULD BE SOMETHING SLIGHTLY GROTESQUE AND WEIRD AND UNSETTLING, IF YOU HAPPEN TO HAVE EITHER REFERENCE OR A PARTICULARLY STRONG MEMORY OF SOME SUCH DEVICE THAT YOU ONCE SAW. I RECALL THE ONES DESIGNED TO LOOK LIKE REINDEERS AS BEING THE WORST, PARTICULARLY IF YOU ALLOWED FOR PART OF THE INANE CARTOON FACE TO BE ROTTED AWAY WITH THE PAINT PEELING AWAY IN STRIPS. PERHAPS THE ANIMAL THAT THE RIDE DEPICTS COULD HAVE A SORT OF FLEISCHER STUDIOS LOOK TO IT, SINCE I ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT THEIR CARTOON ANIMALS COMBINED CUTENESS WITH A VERY DARK AND DERANGED SORT OF QUALITY, WHICH WOULD FIT IN NICELY HERE. LOOKING PAST MITCHUM AS HE SITS FOOLISHLY ASTRIDE HIS GRINNING AND LEERING MECHANICAL RIDE, WE CAN SEE THE JOKER. HE HAS TURNED AWAY FROM THE LAUGHING SAILOR, ALTHOUGH WE CAN STILL SEE THE GLASS CASE STANDING JUST BEYOND THE JOKER AS HE TURNS TO FACE US, PROVIDING A VISUAL LINK WITH THE LAST PANEL ON PAGE EIGHT. THE JOKER STARES COLDLY AT MITCHUM'S TURNED BACK, AND MAYBE IT WOULD BE BEST IF YOU COULD USE THE SHADOWS TO SOMEHOW OBSCURE THE LOWER HALF OF HIS FACE SO THAT WE CANNOT SEE THE GRIN HERE..PERHAPS JUST THE GLINT OF HIS MAD WHITE EYES STARING FROM THE SHADOWS WOULD BE ENOUGH. MITCHUM, IN THE FOREGROUND, FEELS HIMSELF TO BE ON CHUMMY TERMS WITH THE JOKER AND DOESN'T LOOK ROUND AT HIS CLIENT AS HE SPEAKS. ABOUT THEM, THE DISMAL DEAD CARNIVAL STRETCHES.

MITCHUM: Y'know, I'm POSITIVE you won't REGRET this purchase.

MITCHUM: The place isn't THAT dilapidated. Some of the RIDES are still pretty STURDY...

MITCHUM: Really, this could be one HELL of a Carnival.

2.

CHANGE ANGLE NOW SO THAT WE ARE LOOKING AT BOTH THE JOKER AND MITCHUM FROM THE REAR. MITCHUM IS STILL SITTING ON HIS RIDE, FACING AWAY FROM US. THE JOKER HAS WALKED UP

BEHIND HIM SO THAT HE IS STANDING ON THE ESTATE AGENTS RIGHT SIDE AS WE SEE HIM HERE, IF YOU CAN GET THAT TO

WORK WITH THE SPEECH BALLOONS, MAYBE BY HAVING THEM UP AT THE TOP OF THE PICTURE OR SOMETHING, FACING AWAY FROM US BUT TURNED SLIGHTLY SO THAT WE SEE HIM IN PROFILE AS HE STANDS LOOKING DOWN AT THE MAN ON THE MECHANICAL RIDE, WE CAN SEE THAT THE JOKER IS SMILING. HE HAS HIS LEFT HAND RESTING UPON MITCHUM'S SHOULDER AS HE STANDS BESIDE THE SEATED MAN, AND WITH HIS RIGHT HAND HE IS REACHING ROUND THE FRONT TO SHAKE MITCHUM'S RIGHT HAND. IF WE CAN SEE ANY OF MITCHUM'S FACE AS HE LOOKS UP AT THE JOKER HE LOOKS A LITTLE TAKEN ABACK BUT ANXIOUS TO APPEAR FRIENDLY. UP TO YOU WHETHER WE CAN SEE THE ACTUAL HANDSHAKE OR NOT. IF YOU CAN' GET THE DIALOGUE BALLOONS TO WORK WITH THE JOKER ON THE RIGHT THEN PLEASE FEEL FREE TO REVERSE THE WHOLE SHOT SO THAT WE'RE LOOKING AT THE PAIR FROM THE FRONT. I LEAVE IT UP TO YOU.

JOKER: Oh, you're SO right.

JOKER: Thanks to your smooth salesmanship and your silver tongue you've completely SOLD me on the place. Let's SHAKE on it.

MITCHUM: Uh..well, SURE. It's my PRIVILEGE...

3.

WHICHEVER ANGLE YOU FINALLY DECIDED THE LAST SHOT WAS TAKEN FROM, THIS PANEL IS DEFINITELY SEEN FROM THE BACK. THE HANDSHAKE IS OVER AND THE JOKER WITHDRAWS HIS HAND WITH A SMALL, FASTIDIOUS SMILE. THERE IS SOMETHING ATTACHED TO THE PALM, A BIT LIKE A JOY BUZZER, ALTHOUGH I'M NOT SURE HOW CLEARLY WE'LL BE ABLE TO SEE IT. MAYBE IF WE'VE CLOSED IN SO THAT WE SEE BOTH THE JOKER AND MITCHUM IN HALF FIGURE SHOT HERE THEN WE'LL BE ABLE TO GET A GOOD CLEAR SHOT OF THE DEVICE IN THE JOKER'S RIGHT PALM. AS I SAID, IT'S LIKE A JOY BUZZER EXCEPT FOR THE FACT THAT IT HAS A SHORT BUT WICKEDLY SHARP NEEDLE PROTRUDING FROM ITS CENTRE. THE JOKER IS MAYBE EVEN IN THE PROCESS OF REMOVING THE DEVICE WITH THE CAREFUL FINGERS OF HIS OTHER HAND. HIS FACE LOOKS OLD AND INCREDIBLY EVIL. MITCHUM, OVER TOWARDS THE LEFT, SITS ON HIS ODD-LOOKING MECHANICAL RIDE IN AN UNCOMFORTABLY CRAMPED LOOKING POSITION, FACING AWAY FROM US. AS THE JOKER SPEAKS HE IS SMILING SOFTLY TO HIMSELF AND INDEED TALKING MORE TO HIMSELF THEN MITCHUM, NOT EVEN REALLY LOOKING AT THE SEATED AND MOTIONLESS MAN.

JOKER: Indeed it IS.

JOKER: Naturally, I won't be PAYING you anything. My COLLEAGUES persuaded your PARTNER to sign the necessary DOCUMENTS just

over an HOUR ago. The property's mine ALREADY.
JOKER: You're HAPPY with that, I take it?

PAGE 9.

(PANEL) 4.

NOW WE HAVE A SIDE ON SHOT, WITH THE BACK OF MITCHUM AND THE RIDE THAT HE'S ON OVER ON THE EXTREME RIGHT OF THE PANEL, WITH BOTH MITCHUM'S FACE AND THE FACE OF THE MECHANICAL CRITTER HE'S RIDING OFF PANEL HERE. THE JOKER IS TURNED IN PROFILE SO THAT HE'S FACING TOWARDS THE LEFT OF THE PANEL, STARTING TO WALK AWAY FROM THE MAN SITTING THERE WITH HIS KNEES UP ON THE GHASTLY LITTLE ROCKING DEVICE. AS HE STEPS AWAY, THE JOKER IS CAREFULLY DROPPING THE LITTLE SPIKED JOY BUZZER INTO AN INTERIOR POCKET OF HIS COAT, COMPLETELY WITHOUT COMMENT. HIS SMILE IS SMALL AND SATISFIED AND QUIET. BEHIND HIM, MITCHUM DOESN'T MOVE.

JOKER: I can SEE that you are. I'm SO glad.

JOKER: You know, when you see the IMPROVEMENTS I have planned for this place I'll guarantee you'll be absolutely SPEECHLESS!

JOKER: And incidentally, that's a LIFETIME guarantee...

5.

NOW THE JOKER IS WALKING TOWARDS US THROUGH THE MUD OF THE ABANDONED CARNIVAL'S MIDWAY, SO CLOSE TO US HERE THAT HIS HEAD AND SHOULDERS ARE OFF PANEL ABOVE, FROM WHENCE HIS VOICE BALLOON ISSUES. LOOKING BEYOND HIM, WE SEE MITCHUM, STILL SEATED IN THE SAME CRAMPED AND UNGAINLY POSITION ON HIS RIDE, STILL FACING AWAY FROM US. HE HASN'T MOVED.

(OFF) JOKER: Well, I must DASH. There's EQUIPMENT to hire, plus WORKERS who'll suit the general TONE of the establishment...

(OFF) JOKER: ..and then, of course, I've yet to secure my MAIN ATTRACTION.

(OFF) JOKER: DO feel free to stick AROUND.

6.

IN THIS FINAL PANEL, OVER ON THE LEFT, WE ARE LOOKING AT MITCHUM FROM FAIRLY CLOSE UP AS HE SITS FACING US ASTRIDE HIS CHIPPED AND PEELING CARTOON ANIMAL. HIS MOUTH IS CONTORTED INTO A HORRIBLE RICTUS, THE CORNERS PULLING UP TO THE CHEEKS AND THE LIPS PEELING AWAY FROM THE CLENCHED AND GRINDING TEETH. A SINGLE TRICKLE OF BLOOD ESCAPES THE CORNER OF MITCHUM'S MOUTH AND DRIBBLES DOWN HIS CHIN, ISSUING FROM A POINT WITHIN HIS MOUTH WHERE HIS BACK TEETH

HAVE BITTEN THROUGH HIS TONGUE AS THE JAWS LOCKED TOGETHER. DESPITE THE GHASTLY SMILE, MITCHUM'S GLAZING EYES STARE OUT AT US FILLED WITH AN ABOMINABLE LOOK OF PAIN AND SURPRISE AND FROZEN TERROR, SITTING THERE PATHETICALLY UPON HIS RIDE, STONE COLD DEAD. LOOKING BEYOND MITCHUM'S GHASTLY AND GRINNING DEAD FACE IN THE FOREGROUND WE CAN SEE THE JOKER FROM THE REAR, FULL-FIGURE AS HE STROLLS CASUALLY INTO THE BACKGROUND. AS HE GOES, HE SETTLES HIS HAT ONTO HIS HEAD AND PERHAPS TWIRLS HIS CANE JAUNTILY. IN THE FOREGROUND, THE HORRIFIED EYES OF THE DEAD MAN STARE OUT AT US FROM A GRINNING FACE THAT IS ALREADY STARTING TO DRAIN OF COLOUR.

No Dialogue.

PAGE 10.

(PANEL) 1.

NOW WE CUT SUDDENLY ACROSS TO THE BATCAVE TO CHECK UP ON WHAT THE BATMAN IS DOING SINCE DISCOVERING THE JOKER'S ABSENCE FROM THE ASYLUM. AS FAR AS OUR TREATMENT OF THE BATCAVE GOES, I FIGURE WE SHOULD FOLLOW THE SAME GENERAL GUIDELINES AS WE HAVE IN OUR APPROACH TO THE BATMOBILE AD TO BATMAN HIMSELF. IN OTHER WORDS, I RECKON WE SHOULD TRY TO MAKE IT A SORT OF TIMELESS AND IDEALISED VERSION OF WHAT WE THINK THE BATCAVE OUGHT TO LOOK LIKE. AS I SEE IT, IT'S VERY BIG AND VERY STRANGELY LIT, AND THERE ARE MAYBE PLACES WHERE THE STALAGMITES HAVE GROWN UP INTO THE DESCENDING STALACTITES TO FORM PILLARS OF ODDLY-CONTOURED LIMESTONE. ALSO, THERE ARE WEIRD CORAL-LIKE OUTCROPPINGS OF ACCUMULATED BAT GUANO HERE AND THERE. THE CEILING IS UNEVEN, HIGHER IN SOME PLACES THAN OTHERS, AND BATS WHEEL ABOUT THE HIGHEST CHAMBERS. AS FAR AS THE ACTUAL DÉCOR OF THE BATCAVE'S FITTINGS GOES, I RECKON WE'VE GOT TO INCLUDE THE TYRANNOSAUR AND THE GIANT PENNY AND WHATEVER ELSE YOU CAN REMEMBER, AND I'D LIKE A FEW PROPS THAT REALLY STRIKE A STRONG NOSTALGIC CHORD FOR THE BATMAN OF THE FIFTIES AND EARLY SIXTIES. AS AN EXAMPLE, PERHAPS SOMEWHERE WE COULD SEE A STANDING BOARD WITH A DISPLAY OF VARIOUS DIFFERENT TYPES OF BATARANG ATTACHED TO IT. (I THINK THERE WAS EVE A STORY IN WHICH THE VARIOUS DISPARATE BATARANGE WERE DETAILED, IF LEN COULD DIG IT OUT FOR YOU. I THINK IT WAS REPRINTED IN ONE OF THE ANNUALS.) OTHER NOSTALGIC TOUCHES MIGHT INCLUDE A SHOT OF OLD FASHIONED BOX FILES AND A

MICROSCOPE, ALONG WITH THE BATBOAT OR WHATEVER ELSE YOU FEEL LIKE DRAWING. CONTRASTED WITH THIS NOSTALGIA THERE IS AT LEAST ONE LARGE AND ULTRA SOPHISTICATED ARRANGEMENT OF GIANT COMPUTER SCREENS THAT IS PROBABLY MORE ADVANCED THAN A LOT OF THE STUFF WE'VE PREVIOUSLY SEEN IN THE BATCAVE, JUST TO PRESERVE THE SENSE OF ANACHRONISM THAT WE'RE AFTER. IN THIS FIRST PANEL, OVER

ON THE LEFT, WE CAN SEE THE BATMAN'S BLACK FINNED GAUNTLET HOLDING ONE OF THE JOKER CARDS THAT WE LAST SAW ON THE FOLD DOWN TABLE AT ARKHAM ASYLUM, WITH THE JERRY ROBBINS ORIGINAL JOKER DESIGN ON THEM. THE WHITE GRINNING FACE STARING OUT OF THE PANEL AT US FROM THE CARD IS POSITIONED SO THAT IT ECHOES THE PALE AND GRINNING FACE OF THE POISONED MITCHUM IN THE LAST PANEL ON PAGE NINE. LOOKING BEYOND THIS WE GET A GOOD CLEAR ESTABLISHING SHOT OF THE BATCAVE STRETCHING AWAY FROM US WITH ALL ITS SHADOWY MARVELS ON DISPLAY. IN THE FOREGROUND, THE OFF-PANEL BATMAN HOLDS THE PLAYING CARD STEADILY AS HE STARES DOWN INTO THE DEPRAVED AND BLANCHED EYES OF THE CLOWN ON THE PASTEBOARD SURFACE.

No Dialogue.

2.

NOW WE CHANGE ANGLES AND ALSO DIP DOWN A BIT SO THAT WE'RE LOOKING UP SLIGHTLY. WE'RE ROUND THE FRONT OF THE BATMAN NOW AS HE STANDS THERE IN THE BATCAVE, STARING PENSIVELY AND GRIMLY AT THE PLAYING CARD HE HOLDS BEFORE HIM. HE IS STILL WEARING HIS HOOD, CAPE AND COMPLETE BATMAN GEAR, AND HIS EXPRESSION IS VERY SERIOUS AND SOLEMN AND DARK AND THOUGHTFUL. IN THE FOREGROUND, WE CAN SEE THAT THE BATMAN IS STANDING BESIDE A LOWISH TABLE OR WORKSURFACE UPON WHICH A FRAMED PICTURE IS STANDING IN A PROP-UP FRAME. WE CAN ONLY SEE A LITTLE OF THE BACK OF SAID PICTURE HERE, TOWARDS THE FOREGROUND. LOOKING UP PAST IT WE SEE THE BATMAN AS HE LOOKS DOWN AT THE CARD IN HIS HAND, EXPRESSION TROUBLED AND SHADOWY.

No Dialogue.

3.

NOW WE HAVE A CLOSE UP OF THE BATMAN'S FINNED GLOVE AS HE LAYS THE CARD DOWN UPON THE WORK SURFACE OR TABLE IN FRONT OF THE FRAMED PICTURE, WHICH WE CAN NOW SEE THE FRONT OF IN ITS ENTIRETY. THE PICTURE IS BASICALLY A

DUPLICATE OF THE PIN UP THAT APPEARED ON THE BACK OF THE VERY FIRST GIANT BATMAN ANNUAL, WITH THE ENTIRE BATMAN FAMILY AS WAS STANDING THERE AND SMILING AT US, INCLUDING BATWOMAN AND THE ORIGINAL BATGIRL, ACE THE BATHOUND AND BAT-MITE AND GOOD OLD CHUBBY-CHEEKS ROBIN. I FIGURE IT WILL LOOK REALLY HANGING AND INCONGRUOUS IN THE STRANGE AND DARK ATMOSPHERE THAT WE'RE SETTING UP HERE, AS BATMAN SNAPS THE CARD DOWN ONTO THE TABLE/WORK SURFACE, THE SMALL SOUND EFFECT ISSUES FROM IT, JUST TO EMPHASIZE THE SILENCE OF THE REST OF THE PAGE.

(SMALL) F.X. (CARD BEING PLACED DOWN): fnap

PAGE 10.

(PANEL) 4.

NOW WE PULL RIGHT BACK FROM A LONGSHOT, SO THAT WE SEE THE BATMAN FULL FIGURE AS HE WALKS ACROSS THE BATCAVE TOWARDS THE GIANT ARRAY OF COMPUTER SCREENS MENTIONED EARLIER, OF WHICH W CAN PROBABLY ONLY SEE A LITTLE HERE, LOOMING UP IMPRESSIVELY OVER ON THE RIGHT IN CONTRAST TO THIS, MAYBE THIS WOULD BE THE BEST PLACE THE SHOW THE DINOSAUR SCULPTURE TOWARDS THE BACKGROUND, JUST TO CONTRAST THE ANTIQUE BEAST WITH THE ULTRA MODERN STYLISHNESS OF THE SLEEK AND WEIRDLY DESIGNED COMPUTER SET-UP. AS THE BATMAN WALKS SILENTLY AND PURPOSEFULLY ACROSS THE CAVE TOWARDS THE ARRANGEMENT OF GIANT SCREENS WE CAN SEE THAT HE IS PULLING ONE OF HIS BLACK GAUNTLETS OFF AS HE WALKS. APPENDED TO THE SCREEN SYSTEM, WHETHER IT'S VISIBLE HERE OR NOT, THERE IS A SMALLER MONITOR SCREEN WITH A SWIVEL CHAIR SET IN FRONT OF IT..

No Dialogue.

5.

NOW ANOTHER CLOSE UP OF THE BATMAN'S HAND, UNGLOVED NOW, AS HE PUNCHES OUT A PROGRAMME ON THE KEYBOARD IMMEDIATELY BENEATH THE SMALL MONITOR SCREEN. ON THE MONITOR SCREEN THE FOLLOWING WORDS BECOME VISIBLE: JOKER CLASSIFICATION DELTA O-2 PRINT FILE ENLARGEMENT ALL SCREENS. THE BATMAN'S REMOVED GLOVE LIES NEAR THE CONSOLE.

No Dialogue.

6.

NOW A BIGGER PANEL SHOWING A VIEW OF THE BATMAN FROM

THE BACK AS HE STANDS THERE WITH HIS BACK TO US, IMMEDIATELY BEHIND THE EMPTY CHAIR IN FRONT OF THE MONITOR SCREEN. HE IS LOOKING UP AT THE HUGE COMPUTER SCREENS THAT DOMINATE THE PICTURE. THERE ARE SEVERAL OF THEM, CONSTANTLY CHANGING, AND THEIR LIGHT FLOODS THE ENTIRE VISIBLE AREA OF THE BATCAVE, THROWING THE STANDING FIGURE OF THE BATMAN INTO SHARP SILHOUETTE AS HE STANDS THERE WITH HIS HAND RESTING ON THE CHAIR BACK, STUDYING THE SCREENS ABOVE HIM. SOME OF THE SCREENS SHOW DIFFERENT SHOTS OF THE JOKER, TAKEN AT VARIOUS POINTS DURING HIS PAST. SOME SCREENS SHOW MERELY ENLARGEMENTS OF PRINTED PAGES OF PERSONAL DETAILS. AMONGST THE DETAILS THAT WE CAN SEE HERE ARE REAL NAME: UNKNOWN, FOLLOWED BY AGE: UNKNOWN AND RELATIVES: UNKNOWN. THE BATMAN IS QUITE A SMALL FIGURE DOWN AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PICTURE, WITH THE GIANT SCREENS DOMINATING THE IMAGE.

No Dialogue.

PAGE 11.

(PANEL) 1.

NOW, OVER ON THE LEFT MAYBE WE CAN JUST SEE A LITTLE OF THE BATMAN VISIBLE ENTERING THE PANEL FROM OFF PIC ON THE LEFT, RIGHT UP IN THE FOREGROUND. MAYBE JUST HIS HANDS OR SOMETHING AS HE STANDS THERE CONTEMPLATING THE SCREENS, WHICH WE CAN SEE A LITTLE OF OVER ON THE RIGHT. ON THE PART OF THE SCREEN THAT WE CAN SEE HERE ARE THE WORDS PLACE OF BIRTH: UNKNOWN FOLLOWED BY ACTIVITIES PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF CRIMINAL RECORD: UNKNOWN. LOOKING BETWEEN THE BATMAN ON ONE SIDE OF THE PICTURE AND THE COMPUTER ON THE OTHER WE CAN PERHAPS SEE A LONG AND WINDING FLIGHT OF STONE STAIRS THAT LEAD DOWN INTO THE BATCAVE FROM A POINT HIGH UP ON ONE SIDE OF THE SHEER WALLS. AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS THERE IS THE OPEN RECTANGLE OF A DOOR, WITH YELLOW ELECTRIC LIGHT SHINING THROUGH IT FROM BEYOND.

STANDING FRAMED IN THE DOORWAY, POISED AT THE TOP OF THE STEPS AND ABOUT TO DESCEND, WE SEE THE SILHOUETTE OF ALFRED, HOLDING A TRAY. THIS TINY IMAGE REALLY THE FOCUS OF THIS PARTICULAR PANEL.

No Dialogue.

2.

NOW WE ZOOM RIGHT IN UPON ALFRED SO THAT WE SEE HIM HALF FIGURE TO HEAD AND SHOULDERS AS HE STAND THERE AT THE TOP OF THE STEPS WITH THE LIGHT BEHIND HIM,

LOOKING DOWN ON HIS MASTER, ALONE IN THE SHADOWS OF THE BATCAVE. AS HE GAZES DOWN AT THE MAN BENEATH HIM. ALFRED'S EXPRESSION IS AT ONCE CONCERNED AND PITTING. No Dialogue.

3.

NOW A SHOT FROM ABOVE, LOOKING DOWN ON ALFRED AS HE STARTS TO DESCEND THE STONE STAIRS TOWARDS THE MAIN BODY OF THE CAVE BELOW, STILL CARRYING THE TRAY (UPON WHICH, I SHOULD MENTION, IS A SMALL SILVER TEA POT AND A TEA CUP, ALONG WITH A PLATE OF CLUB SANDWICHES.) AS HE DELIVERS HIS MASTER'S SUPPER. LOOKING DOWN BEYOND ALFRED WE SEE THE MAIN BODY OF THE CAVE BELOW US, WITH THE BATMAN STILL STANDING STARING UP AT THE COMPUTER SCREENS, FAIRLY SMALL BENEATH US. WE CAN SEE THAT AS HE STANDS THERE, HE HAS HIS HANDS UP AND IS STARTING TO PULL BACK THE POINTY-EARED HOOD FROM OFF THE TOP OF HIS HEAD, REVEALING THE FACE BENEATH, EVEN THOUGH WE WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE IT FROM THIS DISTANCE.

No Dialogue.

PAGE 11.

(PANEL) 4.

NOW ALFRED HAS REACHED THE BOTTOM OF THE STONE STAIRS AND IS WALKING AWAY FROM US ACROSS THE FLOOR OF THE BATCAVE PROPER TOWARDS THE FIGURE OF THE BATMAN, WHO STANDS WITH HIS BACK TURNED TOWARDS US IN THE MIDDLEGROUND, STILL STARING UP AT THE SCREEN. ALL WE CAN SEE ON THE PORTION OF THE GIANT SCREENS THAT IS EXPOSED HERE ARE THE WORDS :UNKNOWN :UNKNOWN :UNKNOWN ARRANGED IN A COLUMN ON THE RIGHT OF THE SCREEN. AS THE BATMAN STANDS THERE HE HAS HIS HOOD COMPLETELY OFF, SO THAT IT HANGS DOWN HIS BACK WITH THE EARS POINTING DOWNWARDS AND THE EYES EMPTY. WE STILL CANNOT SEE BRUCE WAYNE'S FACE HERE. HE DOESN'T LOOK ROUND AS HE HEARS ALFRED APPROACHING.

No Dialogue.

5.

NOW WE CHANGE ANGLES SO THAT WE SEE BRUCE FROM THE FRONT, HEAD AND SHOULDERS. HIS FACE UNMASKED, IS LIT BY THE HARSH BRILLIANCE OF THE OFF-PANEL COMPUTER SCREENS. IT IS A STRANGELY WIDE-BONED FACED, THE EYES SET DEEP AND FAR APART AND THE JAW ALMOST SQUARE. THE EYES ARE DARK AND UNBLINKING, AND THE EXPRESSION ON

THE THIN LIPS IS GRIM. AS HE STARES UP AT THE OFF-PANEL SCREEN THROUGH STEELY AND SLITTED EYES, THE BATMAN IS ABSENTLY PULLING HIS REMAINING GLOVE OFF. BEHIND HIM, WE SEE ALFRED PLACING THE TRAY DOWN UPON A CONVENIENT WORK TOP, GLANCING ANXIOUSLY ACROSS AT HIS MASTER'S BACK WITH A CONCERNED EXPRESSION AS HE DOES SO. BRUCE DOESN'T LOOK ROUND.

ALFRED: Your REFRESHMENTS, sir.

ALFRED: Master BRUCE?

ALFRED: Is there anything FURTHER I can assist with, or will that be ALL?

6.

NOW WE SEE BOTH MEN FULL FIGURE, WITH BRUCE STILL STANDING STARING UP AT THE SCREENS WITH A DARK AND TROUBLED EXPRESSION WHILE ALFRED STANDS BEHIND HIM. ALFRED IS HELPING TO REMOVE BRUCE'S CLOAK FROM HIS SHOULDERS IN A MANSERVANTLY FASHION. BRUCE DOESN'T LOOK ROUND AT ALFRED AS HE DOES THIS, BUT CONTINUES TALKING AND GAZING UP AT THE SCREEN PARTLY VISIBLE OVER TO THE RIGHT, ON WHICH WE CAN JUST SEE A PART OF THE BOTTOM OF THE JOKER'S FACE, MAYBE SEEN AT AN OBSCURING AND DISTORTING ANGLE HERE.

THE BATMAN: No. That's all.

THE BATMAN: I've been trying to figure out what he intends to DO. It's almost IMPOSSIBLE.

THE BATMAN: I don't KNOW him, Alfred. All these YEARS, and I don't know who HE is anymore than HE knows who I am.

PAGE 11.

(PANEL) 7.

IN THIS FINAL PANEL, ALFRED HAS TURNED AWAY FROM HIS MASTER AND IS NOW LEAVING. HE WALKS TOWARDS US IN MAYBE A HALF-TO THREE QUARTER FIGURE SHOT OVER ON THE RIGHT OF THE PICTURE IN THE FOREGROUND. AS HE WALKS, HE IS CARRYING THE CAPE AND MASK OF THE BATMAN COSTUME OVER HIS ARM, WHERE IT DANGLES EERILY. AS HE WALKS TOWARDS US, HE CANNOT HELP DARTING AN ANXIOUS LOOK BACK OVER HIS SHOULDER TOWARDS THE SOLITARY FIGURE WHO STANDS IN THE NEAR BACKGROUND, FULL FIGURE, GAZING UP AT THE GIANT SCREENS. ON THE GIANT SCREEN THAT WE CAN SEE HERE, THE WHOLE IMAGE AREA IS FILLED WITH A CLOSE UP OF THE JOKER'S GRINNING RED LIPS AND EQUINE TEETH, ENLARGED HERE TO HORRIFIC PROPORTIONS. BRUCE STANDS IN FRONT OF THESE HUGE LIPS, STARING UP AT THEM AND FACING AWAY FROM US. HE IS NO LONGER WEARING

GLOVES, CAPE OR MASK. JUST THE BASIC GRAY UNIFORM, BLACK TRUNKS AND BLACK BOOTS. HE PERHAPS STANDS WITH HIS HANDS FOLDED IN FRONT OF HIM AS HE LOOKS UP PERSIVELY INTO THE SMILE OF HIS ENEMY, LIT EERILY FROM THE FRONT BY THE BRIGHT RADIANCE ISSUING FROM THE SCREEN.

THE BATMAN: How can two people HATE o much without KNOWING each other?

PAGE 12.

(PANEL) 1.

NOW E CUT TO THE HOUSE OR APARTMENT OF COMMISSIONER JAMES GORDON. IT IS THE SAME NIGHT, AND GORDON IS ENJOYING A QUIET EVENING IN, IN THE COMPANY OF HIS DEVOTED DAUGHTER BARBARA. IN THIS FIRST PANEL, ALL WE CAN SEE OF GORDON ARE HIS HANDS AS WE LOOK DOWN AT THEM THROUGH HIS EYES AS HE SITS THERE IN A COMFORTABLE ARMCHAIR (WHICH WON'T BE VISIBLE HERE). ALL WE MAINLY SEE HERE IS THE FRONT PAGE OF THE GOTHAM EXAMINER, WHICH GORDON IS HOLDING IN HIS LAP. (IF THERE IS A MORE WELL-KNOWN GOTHAM EVENING PAPER..THE ONE VICKI VALE WORKS FOR, FOR INSTANCE..THEN PERHAPS LEN COULD FIND OUT ITS NAME AND PASS IT ON TO YOU. A VICKI VALE BY LINE ON THE FRONT PAGE ARTICLE WOULD HELP TO DRAG ANOTHER MINOR ELEMENT OF THE BATMAN MYTHOS INTO THE STORY, EVEN IF ONLY TENUOUSLY. SEE WHAT YOU THINK.) THE HEADLINE READS 'ASYLUM SECURITY UPROAR AS MANIAC ESCAPES AGAIN', WITH A FAIRLY REDUNDANT PHOTOGRAPH OF THE JOKER'S EMPTY CELL APPENDED TO IT. A SMALLER SUB HEADLINE LOWER DOWN READS 'CRIME-FIGHTER UNAVAILABLE FOR COMMENT', RIGHT NEXT TO A SCOWLING HEAD AND SHOULDERS PHOTOGRAPH OF THE BATMAN. ONE OF GORDON'S HANDS IS HOLDING THE PAPER, WHILE HIS RIGHT HAND, ENTERING THE PICTURE AT THE BOTTOM RIGHT CORNER, IS HOLDING A PAIR OF SCISSORS WITH WHICH HE IS APPARENTLY GOING TO CLIP THE STORY FROM THE NEWSPAPER. HIS BALLOONS COME FROM OFF PIC.

(OFF) GORDON: I HATE this.

(OFF) GORDON: Whenever we JAIL him, I think "Please God, KEEP him there." Then he ESCAPES and we all sit round hoping he won't do anything TOO awful this time.

(OFF) GORDON: I HATE it.

2.

NOW WE PULL BACK SO THAT WE ARE NOW BEHIND GORDON, STANDING BEHIND HIS COMFY ARMCHAIR AND LOOKING DOWN

OVER HIS SHOULDER. WE CAN STILL SEE THE FRONT PAGE OF THE APPEAR AS GORDON STARTS TO CUT OUT THE CLIPPING, AND WE CAN ALSO SEE THAT RIGHT IN FRONT OF GORDON'T CHAIR THERE IS A GLASS COFFEE TABLE. STANDING ON THE TABLE THERE IS A PAST APPLICATOR AND ALSO AN OPEN SCRAP-BOOK. LOOKING PAST THIS WE SEE THE REST OF THE SPACIOUS LIVING ROOM, INCLUDING A DOOR AWAY UP A SHORT OPEN-PLAN HALL IN THE BACKGROUND. WALKING TOWARDS THE SEATED COMMISSIONER, FULL FIGURE IS HIS DAUGHTER BARBARA. SHE IS CARRYING A TRAY UPON WHICH THERE ARE TWO STEAMING MUGS OF COCOA AND MAYBE A PACKET OF SOME INDIGENOUS AMERICAN COOKIE. SHE SCOLDS HER FATHER, SMILING WITH HER LIPS PURSED KNOWINGLY AS SHE DOES SO. SHE IS ABOUT TO PUT THE TRAY DOWN UPON THE ONLY EXISTING CLEAR SPACE ON THE COFFEE TABLE, UP ONE END.

BARBARA: Dad, just ONCE could you leave your work at the OFFICE and RELAX? I made you COCOA.

GORDON: THANK you, Sweetheart. I'll drink it when I've pasted this latest CLIPPING in.

3.

CHANGE ANGLE SO THAT NOW WE CAN JUST SEE A LITTLE OF BARBARA'S FRONT AS SHE BENDS SLIGHTLY TO PLACE THE TRAY DOWN ON THE COFFEE TABLE, CAREFULLY AVOIDING THE OPEN SCRAPBOOK. ALTHOUGH SHE KEEPS HER EYE MINDFULLY ON THE TRAY OF HOT BEVERAGE AS SHE PUTS IT DOWN, SHE CONTINUES TO TALK TO HER FATHER. LOOKING PAST BARBARA OVER ON THE RIGHT AND OVER THE GLASS TABLE TOP WE CAN SEE GORDON SITING FACING US IN THE MIDDLE GROUND. HE HAS CLIPPED OUT THE FRONT PAGE ITEM AND PICKED UP THE PAST APPLICATOR, WITH WHICH HE IS LIBERALLY SPREADING PASTE UPON THE BACK OF THE PIECE OF NEWSPAPER, PERHAPS WEARING A SLIGHTLY ABSURD FROWN OF CONCENTRATION. HE DOESN'T LOOK AT BARBARA AS SHE SPEAKS TO HIM.

BARBARA: Y'know, I found that CATWOMAN scrapbook you said was MISSING. It was behind the WARDROBE.

PAGE 12.

(PANEL) 3. (FROM OVER)

BARBARA: Some day you out to let me work out a proper FILING system, like we used at the LIBRARY.

GORDON: Hmm.

4.

NOW WE CHANGE ANGLES AGAIN FOR A SHOT FROM OVERHEAD.

BARBARA HAS STRAIGHTENED UP AND HAS PICKED UP HER OWN CUP OF COCOA AS SHE DOES SO, HOLDING IT IN ONE HAND. WITH THE OTHER HAND SHE POINTS REPROACHFULLY DOWN AT THE TABLETOP, WHERE THE COMMISSIONER IS SMOOTHING THE GUMMED NEWSPAPER CLIPPING ONTO THE WAITING PAGE OF THE SCRAP BOOK. AS BARBARA POINTS OUT, HE'S USED TOO MUCH GLUE. GORDON'S HEAD IS TURNED TO ONE SIDE, AWAY FROM BARBARA, AS IF HE HEARS A NOISE FROM OFF-PANEL. (I DON'T WANT TO USE A KNOCK-KNOCK SOUND EFFECT HERE, AND I FIGURE WE CAN PROBABLY GET IT OVER WITH JUST THE PICTURE AND THE DIALOGUE. IF YOU DISAGREE WHEN YOU GET IT DRAWN UP THEN CALL ME AND WE CAN WORK IT OUT.)

BARBARA: Urrgh. Look, you used too much PASTE! It's all squidging under the edges of the CLIPPING. You're going to get it on your PANTS...

GORDON: Barbara, you're FUSSIER than your MOTHER wa...

GORDON: Was that the DOOR?

5.

CHANGE ANGLE AGAIN. ONCE MORE WE ARE LOOKING THROUGH GORDON'S EYES AS THE SCRAPBOOK AS HE HOLDS IT UP TO LOOK AT IT, OPENING IT TO THE VERY FIRST PAGE OF ALL UPON WHICH IS PASTED A VERY OLD AND YELLOWING NEWSPAPER CLIPPING. THE CLIPPING HAS A BLURRY-LOOKING PHOTOGRAPH OF THE BATMAN IN THE SAME POSTURE AND COSTUEM AS BOB KANE ORIGINALLY DEPICTED HIM IN THE LAST PANEL OF THE MUCH-REPRINTED BATMAN ORIGIN STORY, CROUCHED ON A ROOF WITH HIS CAPE SPREADING OUT IN TWO SEPARATE WINGS. THE HEADLINE OF THE PIECE READS "BAT-GARBED VIGILANTE CRITICALLY INJURES MURDERER" WITH A SMALLER SUB-HEADLINE BELOW THAT READS "DISFIGURED HOMICIDAL MANIA IN HOSPITAL". THESE CLIPPINGS RELATE TO THE VERY FIRST RECORDED APPEARANCE OF THE JOKER.

GORDON'S BALLOONS COME FROM OFF-PANEL IN THE FOREGROUND AS HE COMMENTS UPON THE OLD AND FADED CLIPPING. LOOKING PAST THE PAPER WE CAN SEE BARBARA AS SHE WALKS AWAY FROM US TOWARDS THE DOOR, STILL CARRYING HER MUG OF COCOA IN ONE HAND. WE CAN SEE THE DOOR ITSELF BEYOND HER IN THE FAR BACKGROUND.

BARBARA: Yeah. It'll be COLLEEN from across the street. Tonight's our YOGA CLASS.

BARBARA: C'mon, Dad..COMPANY! Tidy your SCRAPBOOKS away.

(OFF) GORDON: Heh. Look at THIS one. First time they MET. Now what YEAR was that?

6.

NOW WE CAN NO LONGER SEE GORDON AT ALL, SINCE WE HAVE PANNED ACROSS TO THE DOOR WHERE WE NOW SEE BARBARA STANDING, FACING THE DOOR IN A THREE QUARTER TO HALF-FIGURE SHOT. SHE IS REAHING OUT WITH ONE HAND AND STARTING TO OPEN THE DOOR, HOLDING THE CUP OF COCOA IN THE OTHER HAND. AS SHE OPENS THE DOOR SHE IS GLANCING BACK OVER HER SHOULDER CASUALLY AS SHE SPEAKS TO HER FATHER, SEATED OFF PANEL AS FEW PACES BEHIND HER. SHE SMILES WEARILY BUT INDULGENTLY. GORDON'S BALLOON ISSUES FROM OFF-PANEL BEHIND HER AS SHE STARTS TO OPEN THE DOOR.

BARBARA: Well, I remember you describing the WHITE FACE and the GREEN HAIR to me when I was TEN.

Scared the HELL out of me.

(OFF) GORDON: I thought you'd be INTERESTED.

BARBARA: Yeah, well, I had some interesting NIGHTMARES.